

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training  
Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

**ALBERT E. FAIRCHILD**

*Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy*

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**INTERVIEW**

*Q: Today is 17 January 2012. This is an interview with Albert E. Fairchild, and is done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, and I am Charles Stuart Kennedy. We are doing it on the campus of the Foreign Service Institute. Do you go by Al or Albert or Bert?*

FAIRCHILD: Well I used to go by Al, but now I am more and more known as Albert. Maybe that's because of my increasing age, or perhaps because my wife is taking more charge of what people call me and finds Albert more dignified.

*Q: All right, let's get started. When and where were you born?*

FAIRCHILD: I was born in Abington, Pennsylvania on November 1, 1941. We lived in the Philadelphia area until I was about six years old, and then the family moved south to North Carolina.

*Q: OK, let's do a little bit of your family. Let's take the Father's side, the Fairchild side. What do you know about them?*

FAIRCHILD: Well, I know they are primarily English and Welsh in origin. My father was from Pennsylvania, the Philadelphia area. His father was an engineer with Westinghouse and had his salary cut in half during the depression, but at least he had a job and some income. My father received a football scholarship to Duke University in the early 1930's; I guess it was 1932 or 1933. That meant in those days that they gave you a job, in this case waiting on tables in the dining hall. He played a line position, I forget whether it was tackle or guard, on the varsity football team. After graduating and marrying my mother, they moved to the Philadelphia area and my father worked as a metallurgical engineer for companies like Metallurgical Laboratories, the New York Ship Building Corporation. In fact I remember asking him once, "Daddy, what did you do during the war? Which battle were you in?" He said, "I fought the battle of the New York Ship Building Corporation. That is where I was." He did not volunteer for military service in World War II nor was he drafted. I think his job may have been classified as a special national interest or at least was in a category that exempted him from the draft.

*Q: Yes, well obviously we had a, particularly with engineers, we had a tremendous production program which was vital to our winning the war. A lot of men were involved in that.*

FAIRCHILD: My father was always a very pragmatic man, but in later life he became considerably more introspective...as I guess most people do. I remember a conversation we had one evening during one of my visits to my parents after I was an FSO. He noted that ever since he started working professionally he worked on things that killed people. He felt very bad about that, not morose just bad, although I am sure that he felt his work was always in a good cause. He started off working on alloys for torpedo casings and ship hulls. The last thing he worked on was designing and building an assembly line for gold plating the tips of ceramic resistors in a semi-vacuum. The resistors were meant to go into Nike missile guidance systems.

*Q: OK, on your mother's side, what about that family?*

FAIRCHILD: They are a combination of mostly English and some French. In fact the family name Trivette was originally Trevot, and as I recall the first Trevot emigrated from France in the late 17<sup>th</sup> or early 18<sup>th</sup> Century. My mother was born and raised in Watauga County North Carolina. The nearest town was Boone. Grandfather was a farmer who did a lot of preaching, but he probably would have said he was a preacher who did a lot of farming. His church was something called the Advent Christian Church, which was a splinter off of the Methodist Church. I gather the theological point of departure was what happens to the soul after death. Is it interred with the body or is it judged immediately? I forget who believed what but I think the Advent Christian Church believed that the soul was interred with the body and not judged until the final Day of Judgment. That was reason enough apparently for them to split off from Methodism. I should mention in this context that my father was raised in the Episcopal Church, so after he and Mother were married they compromised and met in the middle, which was in fact the Methodist Church. That was the church I went to when I was young. Although later in life my mother started going with my father to the Episcopal Church.

*Q: How did your mother and father meet?*

FAIRCHILD: Well, my mother had gone for her higher education to a school in Boone that was then known as the Appalachian State Teacher's College. Now it is known as the Appalachian branch of the University of North Carolina. When she graduated she went to Duke to do a graduate degree in education. That is where she met a charming senior football player named Albert R. Fairchild, and I guess you could say the rest is history.

*Q: Did you grow up in the Philadelphia area? Is that right?*

FAIRCHILD: No, because we moved to North Carolina when in 1948 when I was six years old. By "we" I mean my parents and my younger brother William, or Bill, as he is usually known. My father had taken a new job with Western Electric Corporation that was just setting up operations in North Carolina, specifically in Greensboro, Burlington, and Winston-Salem. He drew the Winston-Salem ticket. He was, as he later put it, in the first wave of Yankees to hit the beach in North Carolina in the late 1940's. There were others who came later and expanded their operations. So this move suited my mother because it brought her closer to her family in Boone. So Winston-



Salem, North Carolina was the city where I was raised. I would definitely say that it was a good place to raise a child – certainly in the 1950’s.

*Q: Ok, well let’s talk about that. In the first place about the family. How important was religion in your family?*

FAIRCHILD: It was there as a constant element of life, but I wouldn’t say it was the most important thing. That said, religion certainly wasn’t the least important thing. I remember going to Sunday school almost every Sunday and went to church as I became older. I also remember being very fond of the pastor at the church; Dr. Mark Depp was his name. He had a very gentle, pragmatic approach to Christianity. I think if you were to describe his theological views, he might even have been called an Arian Christian – after that early and heretical bishop Arius. In other words, he was someone who emphasized the humanity of Christ as opposed to his divinity.

Then later on, there was an important change I should mention because it impacted my life in very meaningful ways, specifically regarding my own education and the evolution of my views on religion. At a certain point my parents determined that the public education available in Winston-Salem in general and at Reynolds High School in particular, which was the premier high school, was not very good. I remember my father being appalled at the fact that the microscopes in the science lab were so old that they were made in Weimar Germany and were falling apart, whereas the football team had three changes of uniforms. Even as a former football player he was upset by that. My parents didn’t want to or felt they couldn’t afford to send us to boarding school, but there was a very good Catholic High School in town, and they decided to send us there. The education was marvelous. The teachers were the Sisters of St. Joseph, most of whom were very good teachers. All of the equipment in the science laboratory was brand new. The discipline was also much better in the Catholic high school. At Reynolds High School I recall that there was just absolute chaos during class breaks, and this lack of order bothered me so much that I complained bitterly to my parents about it. Also my brother was beginning to have some behavior issues at school, and they thought the discipline of the nuns would be a good thing for him. So we went there as I began the tenth grade.

*Q: When one mentions nuns in lower school, one always thinks about very stern ladies with rulers going around rapping knuckles. How did you find that?*

FAIRCHILD: Well there were one or two nuns who did that. Actually I think my brother and I were very fond of most of them. The school was then known as Villa Marie Anna Academy, named for the daughter of the wealthy woman who had given her mansion to the Diocese of Raleigh for use as a school. I went there only for the last three years of high school, and with the construction of a new building in 1959 the name was changed to Bishop McGuinness Memorial High School. My brother went there for all four years. The first principal, Sister Eileen Patrice, was very kind and gentle but also a reasonably strict disciplinarian. The two toughest sisters I remember are the ones I think I have the most fondness for as I recall them. Sister Irma Mildred taught science and math. I still have a vision of her grabbing Bill Connery by the ear and dragging him all the way through the school when he was cutting up in science lab. “Cutting up” is, of course, a Southernism for misbehaving. She was tough, but she was very good. I kept up with her after graduating, virtually until she died. At some point when I was a desk officer in the Office of

West African Affairs back in 1970 I contributed the then princely sum of \$25 to a fund so she could travel to Ireland to visit her family. That was when I learned that her real name was Kathleen Bateman, and I had several long phone conversations with her before and after her trip to the “old sod.” Another sister I remember fondly was Sister Mary Herman, who taught Latin. She was very strict too, although she didn’t take that ruler out to enforce discipline. She occasionally had to blush as we read certain passages in Latin, for example the part of the Aeneid where Aeneas and Dido consummate their marriage in a cave, without having had a proper marriage of course.

*Q: Well during this time during elementary and high school and that period, where did your family fit politically? Or did they?*

FAIRCHILD: I was aware that both of my parents were inclined toward the Democratic Party. My father and mother became a little more active while I was in high school. They didn’t really talk to us in terms of Democrat or Republican. They made a point of discussing moral and policy issues, and their positions on those issues inclined them more towards one side than the other. So they acknowledged that Republicans were not always wrong and the Democrats not always right, but they did cause us to think that if you are a decent person and interested in social justice you should opt for the Democratic side rather than the other most of the time.

*Q: Obviously a question at that period of time. What are your recollections of your community responding to the racial problem?*

FAIRCHILD: That is very interesting because the North Carolina public schools resisted integration. Even though Brown versus the Board of Education was decided in 1954, a number of states tried to delay implementation or any kind of changes for some time following that supreme court ruling.

*Q: We are here in Virginia which did massive resistance.*

FAIRCHILD: Well at the time in North Carolina they had something called the Pearsall Plan, which was basically the “separate but equal” argument. They were fighting school integration in the courts. When we left Reynolds High School it was not integrated, and I don’t think it was integrated until after I was in college. But the Catholic high school was integrated – maybe not the first year we went there but certainly the second year. There were four or five black children in school, and they did quite well. I remember when the new school building was built and made ready for my senior year, there was a large plate glass window above the front entrance with a cross or rather a crucifix on it. It was broken out twice by someone, or more likely a group of people, who came by at night to vandalize the school. I remember at a PTA meeting that I happened to attend, where the new principal presided. He was a priest from Greensboro, a Lebanese American man named Father Joseph Shofety. He said, “I didn’t realize there was so much anti-Catholic feeling here in Winston-Salem.” My father, who was one of the officers in the PTA, said something like, “Father this has nothing to do with religion. It has everything to do with the fact that this school is integrated. Let me offer an engineer’s suggestion that when we replace the plate glass next time we spend little more and get Plexiglas so the bricks will bounce off of it.”

*Q: Did you find among your compatriots, the kids you were with, a feeling about integration at all?*

FAIRCHILD: Not much except that in the Catholic high school no one seemed either to enjoy or object to the presence of black kids. They played sports, studied well, and got along with everyone. They just became our classmates. I don't remember ever hearing anyone use the "N word" for example in high school. I think that was just the way it was, just the mindset of the children at that time. I should add that my father served as an advisor to a few junior engineers clubs in local colleges, including a couple of what we now call predominantly black colleges...although perhaps in the 1950s they were 100% black. So, unlike many white families in Winston-Salem at the time, we attended social events at the home of my father's black friends and colleagues and had them to our home as well.

*Q: As a student, let's start with elementary school, what were your favorite subjects?*

FAIRCHILD: Well, it was virtually everything except math and science. I wasn't much into those fields of study.

*Q: How did your father take that?*

FAIRCHILD: I think my relative lack of interest in those subjects probably disappointed him. My brother was quite the opposite. Math and science were his favorites. He also got very much into music while in grade school and later on, demonstrating perhaps that linkage between mathematics and music that a lot of people talk about. I was more interested in English, writing, languages, and history. They remained my favorites in college and graduate school. Even though I did study piano and violin for a few years in grade school, I never kept up with them. So when I explain what the difference is between my brother and me with regard to music I usually say that he is the artist whereas I am the patron of the arts.

*Q: Were you much of a reader starting early on?*

FAIRCHILD: Yes, and I tended to favor history and biographies. These were the types of books I really preferred. I also got interested in foreign languages too, as did my brother. I remember after the Soviet Union launched the Sputnik satellite in 1957 we both pestered our father to help us study Russian. He found somebody at Western Electric who was actually Ukrainian, and that gentleman gave us private lessons after school in Russian. My brother even took up the balalaika; he was so interested in adding this musical element to our fascination with Russian. Even when we went on to college we kept that up that interest, and I did study Russian for two years in college.

*Q: Well this brings up the question, did the outside world intrude much? I mean were you picking up were foreign countries places you were interested in?*

FAIRCHILD: Yes. We were interested in foreign travel, although we never did it while in high school. I never traveled abroad until the summer after my junior year in college. My brother did so a bit later. But we were aware of things international. I remember my father went to the World Metallurgical Congress in 1955 as a representative of the American Society for Metals. They had

meetings over the course of four or five weeks in four different countries: Great Britain, Belgium, France and Germany. We were fascinated with this trip, and he reported on it fully when he came home bringing souvenirs, postcards, and photos with him.

*Q: Well how about in high school? Did you keep up with current events? Was the Soviet Union the big devil out there?*

FAIRCHILD: Oh yes. We were all attuned to the cold war set of problems and issues. It didn't seem to impact our lives that much except we did have occasional drills where we would get under our desk. I remember thinking at the time that if what we know about thermonuclear war is true this desk isn't going to be much good when the bomb goes off. I worked after school and on Saturdays at a clothing store called the Frank A. Stith Company. It was one of the two better men's clothing stores in town. I remember that the sales people who worked there loved to talk about international issues, especially one woman in particular who kept referring to the evil Mr. "Kruchek." She somehow couldn't get Khrushchev pronounced correctly. She was we would call today a rabid right-winger, and was all ready to go off and bomb the Soviet Union. So, yes, we thought about those issues and discussed from time to time, but I don't think they had any immediate direct impact on our lives.

*Q: Did the community you were in intrude on you at all. I mean you have got integration. You have got the stuff with the Soviet Union and other things. Was it a southern town or a more cosmopolitan town?*

FAIRCHILD: I would say it was somewhere in between. Winston-Salem was not all that cosmopolitan, although obviously we knew people like the Ukrainian engineer who taught us Russian for a year or two. Winston-Salem had it's own symphony orchestra. In fact while still in high school my brother played the bassoon with the symphony orchestra. So you had that cultural aspect. But it was in some ways if not a red neck town at least a very conservative southern town. There were about 125,000 people there at the time I was in high school. The big industries were Reynolds Tobacco Company, of course, the P. Huber Haines knitting company – the makers of Haines nylons and other products, and of course the Western Electric installation where my father worked. The social set of my parents was mostly focused on Western Electric people and others we knew through school or church connections.

*Q: In high school, what were sort of the dating patterns, social activities and so on?*

FAIRCHILD: I think most of the events were group events, dances held at the school or perhaps a social hall connected with the church. There was individual dating, although a lot of the individual dating ended up having a group aspect. For example three or four couples would meet at a bowling alley. Bowling was very big at the time as a dating activity. I don't think people were going out to dinner very much except for a hamburger or something like that. My father was active in Masonic activities, and my brother and I eventually joined the Order of DeMolay – a boys' Masonic group named after the 13<sup>th</sup> Century Templar Grand Master Jacques DeMolay who was burned at the stake by King Philip the Fair of France with the connivance of the Holy Inquisition. The DeMolay also had group social activities, like dances and hayrides.

*Q: How about movies? Were you a movie buff?*

FAIRCHILD: I have become one with time, but I don't think I was crazy about movies then. We would go obviously to some movies. I remember South Pacific was very popular, as was the thriller Psycho. I don't think I could be described as a film buff until college, and then I became interested in the "new wave" coming out of France, the Fellini and Antonioni films from Italy, and Ingmar Bergman's films from Sweden. And, how could I forget them, the Terry Thomas comedies from England. My taste for music expanded too at college. At home my brother and I were exposed to classical music as well as some popular music, meaning Broadway show tunes, and of course as teenagers we educated ourselves on rock and roll. At the University of North Carolina I discovered new areas of classical music that I hadn't known before, everything from Carl Orff's Carmina Burana to the Bach cello concertos and grand opera.

*Q: Well then while you were there it was assumed you would go on to university of some sort.*

FAIRCHILD: Yes, absolutely. I don't think we ever thought otherwise. Nor did my parents. I remember at one point I had decided pretty much that I wanted to be a diplomat. I had been first exposed to this in some way in high school when a real live diplomat came to town and spoke at Wake Forest College. I forget the exact title of the speech, but he was basically talking about his life as a cultural attaché. He was a career USIA officer. That interested me very much, because I thought I would like to do something like that even though I had no clue on what most diplomats do during a regular day at the office, but it sounded interesting. So I knew I was going to go on and probably study international relations, which I did, and history and related subjects. I ended up being valedictorian of my high school class, which meant that I had I think the best grades of those in my class. It was a very small graduating class – only 24 people. Several friends got scholarships, and I received a national merit scholarship although it was for a minor amount of money, \$100 as I recall. At my mother's suggestion I wrote to Senator William Fulbright, then the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, to ask advice on where best to pursue my higher education. In other words should I go to what you might describe as a fancy school, Ivy League, or go to a state school. His reply was to suggest that I just go to a good state school, and specifically UNC, for the undergraduate degree. Then for a graduate degree he suggested going to a university like Princeton, Yale, Harvard, or Georgetown.

*Q: Very good advice.*

FAIRCHILD: I think so, and that is what I did. This advice also helped me deal with not being able to go to Princeton, where I had been accepted. I was quite excited talking to my parents about Princeton, but they made it clear they didn't believe they could afford to send me there and support my brother as well at his eventual university. That seemed to be the end of the Princeton discussion, and by the time I went to graduate school my interests directed me elsewhere.

*Q: Well of course you had the University of North Carolina didn't you?*

FAIRCHILD: Yes, and that is where I went. It was I think a great school, and remains so today.

*Q: Well yes. I think this is one of the pre-eminent state universities and has been for some time. How was it at that time?*

FAIRCHILD: I thought it was very good. We had about 10,000 students. That included all undergraduate faculties, the medical school, and the graduate school.

*Q: So it was pretty small.*

FAIRCHILD: At the time it seemed quite big. By today's standards the size would be like a community college somewhere. They had many good academic departments, including history and languages. I ended up in a program known simply as international relations. You could do it either by choosing a geographic focus or a subject focus. I ended up doing mostly history and taking a little bit of an academic peek at the Far East, meaning Chinese and Japanese history, as well as Russia and Latin America. I also took Russian language courses and continued my French, which I had started in high school. All in all Chapel Hill was a pretty good experience, and I ended up graduating a semester early.

An important part of my life at college was my fraternity, Delta Psi, known more commonly as St. Anthony Hall. The St. A's are a small fraternity, founded at Columbia in 1842, and at the time I joined in 1962 there were only eleven chapters – all in the East. We had three in the South (UVA, UNC, and Old Miss) and the rest were at Ivy League schools in the Northeast. At the "Hall" we were fairly serious types, not indulging in the silly pranks for which fraternities were notorious in those days, although we had nothing against having good parties. Pledges and brothers were expected to do literary duties every week for our meetings, meaning writing and presenting a serious essay, a poem, and a humorous article. If one failed to produce one's literary duty there was a heavy fine - \$20 as I recall, a lot of money in the early 1960s. As being in a fraternity was not cheap, and as my parents provided only a limited amount of funds for my academic year, I needed to earn extra money. So, in the fraternity I ran for and was elected as manager of the dining room – we called it "Antoine's" after St. Anthony. As dining room manager the "pay" I received was to have all my meals free of charge, thus saving quite a bit of money over the course of my remaining time at UNC.

While at UNC I also converted to the Roman Catholic faith, and was baptized in the Church of Saint Thomas Aquinas in the spring of 1963. One could say that the seeds planted in high school had born fruit in college. In addition to my religious ideas, which could be best summarized as "if you want to be a Christian it makes sense to join the original church," I was very much aware of the cultural value and importance of the Roman Catholic Church in the history of Western civilization. So much of our literature, art, and history is intimately tied to that of the Church, and I wanted to be part of that larger whole. My conversion also made my trip to Europe in the summer of 1963 so much more meaningful, both in terms of visiting the monuments of Western culture and attending the coronation of Pope Paul VI in Rome. The fact that I subsequently fell away from the Church in no way lessens my conviction that this was the right thing for me to have done at the time.

*Q: What year did you graduate?*

FAIRCHILD: 1964. I graduated in January, and got my diploma in the mail sometime after that. I will tell a revealing story on myself here. I remember talking with my advisor in the beginning of the fall semester the previous year, and he said, "You know if you take one more course, you can graduate early." I replied, "No I didn't realize that." He then said, "Well you should study the UNC catalog a little more carefully." This exchange recalled a conversation I had with him earlier when after my first semester in my freshman year I had not done well in calculus, or the introduction to calculus. I had two A's two B's and a D in calculus. In fact there were math majors in the course who were having difficulty. Some tended to blame the professor who would come to class in tennis gear. It was clear he was more interested in going to the tennis game after class than talking to students.

*Q: So, did you drop mathematics?*

FAIRCHILD: That's right. My advisor asked, "Did you notice that you don't have to take math? The University of North Carolina has a requirement for so many credits in what we call one of the studies of precision, which are defined as either mathematics, Greek or Latin." Well I had done four years of Latin in high school so I said, "Bingo, I will have some of that please." So I jumped into Livy and Catullus and got nothing but A's. I really should have read the school catalog more closely.

*Q: Well graduating relatively early in the 1960's did you get any flavor of the anti Vietnam movement and free speech and all that? Was that prevalent at the time?*

FAIRCHILD: When I was at Chapel Hill the war wasn't really prominent on anybody's attention screen. Nor was the free speech movement. But the issue of racial integration was very much on everybody's mind, and I remember attending a number of demonstrations. I was also involved in picketing a restaurant that did not seat black patrons. I almost spent a night in jail because for that, but apparently the restaurant decided not to press charges. Everybody was released. We were very much aware of the need to press for social change, although it was pretty much limited to the racial integration issues. I also served on the campaign of a young black man named Kellis Parker who was running for student body president on the Student Party ticket. Kellis didn't win, but I was very happy and proud to have served on his campaign.

*Q: How stood integration at the University of North Carolina at that time?*

FAIRCHILD: Yes, it was integrated, but not extensively so. You would see black students here and there, but there were not very many of them. I suppose one could say that you noticed them because there weren't that many of them. Sort of like you noticed the women in your A-100 basic officers class in the Foreign Service at that time. My A-100 course was in 1966; it was the largest class to date, 80 people, and there were only 9 or 10 women. I can remember the names of at least six or seven of them. They were quite noticeable because of their small numbers, and one or two actually quit during the A-100 course for one reason or another.

*Q: What was your major?*

FAIRCHILD: The degree was a BA in international studies. It was a combination of political science, history, mostly history. You had to take a foreign language. I ended up taking two. I wanted to continue the French that I had started in high school, and Russian was of interest. My professor of Russian was actually a Serb, with the historically significant name of Draga Mikhailovich. No relation to the Mikhailovich who led the Chetniks in World War II, however. He was a very good teacher, although later in life I remember talking to a Russian woman, well trying to speak Russian, my Russian was never that great. She said, "You know your pronunciation is wonderful but you seem to have sort of a Yugoslav accent." I thought to myself, thank you professor Mikhailovich.

*Q: On the political side when you were a freshman, did the 1960 election engage you? This was Kennedy versus Nixon. This was sort of a time when many young people really became politically involved.*

FAIRCHILD: Very much so. My close friends and I were very much for Jack Kennedy. I remember gleefully watching his inauguration in January of 1961, and being delighted that he and not Richard Nixon had been elected. Yes, we were pretty much aware of national political issues and very much engaged.

*Q: Well now were you still keeping diplomacy as a goal in mind during your time in college?*

FAIRCHILD: Yes, absolutely. I knew that is where I was headed eventually. I knew, however, that I wanted to get a masters degree, mainly because I wanted to increase my academic credentials. I guess that is the way I look at it now, and I recall thinking that if diplomacy didn't work out I could always go on for a doctorate and eventually teach at the university level. I graduated a semester early, as I already noted, and was going around the country selling Collier Encyclopedias with a team of young men. While somewhere in South Carolina I had a phone call from my father telling me that I had better get home because a draft notice had arrived in the mail and they wanted me to report the following week. So I dashed home, went to see the draft board, and was told I would be drafted unless I was in graduate school by the end of the following week. I had been told by the office of student affairs at UNC that they would put my name in with the regular graduating class in June of 1964, but I guess somebody slipped up and it went in early. Although I did explore going into Navy OCS, even to the point of taking a bus to Charlotte N.C. in order to take a pre-induction physical, I didn't end up doing that. I contacted by phone the graduate schools I had applied to: Columbia, Harvard, Chicago, and Georgetown. Of course everybody was on the semester system except the University of Chicago, which was on the trimester system. They said, "Our next trimester starts next week and we would love to have you." After arriving in Chicago and registering at the University, I went to ask the student affairs office to send a deferment letter to my draft board. Those deferment letters were an annual requirement. Even after I joined the Foreign Service the draft board had to have some letter showing I was employed and doing something useful. I had a wonderful time at Chicago. It was a magnificent school and had a very exciting intellectual atmosphere. I actually had Hans Morgenthau for a class, and he was very much the Herr Doktor Professor you would imagine him to be. One of the reasons I was also happy to go there was because they had a number of fairly well known and very good scholars on Russian subjects. There was a man named Leopold Haimson who taught 19<sup>th</sup> century intellectual history. He was simply brilliant, and it was simply a joy to listen to him lecture. Michael



Cherniavsky was also teaching there; he was a medievalist and also a wonderful professor. I had a political science professor, Jeremy Azrael, whose classes were also great, and who was also an accomplished intellectual entertainer. He eventually worked in the State Department Office of Policy Planning during the Reagan administration. I will always remember a phrase he developed to explain Soviet officials' behavior, especially those who were running economic enterprises. You had to break the law to meet your quotas and so forth, and of course had to make deals with somebody else for supplies and transport. His phrase for that unofficially required behavior was the "institutionalization of compulsive criminality." I thought that was an apt and amusing characterization of that aspect of Soviet society. There were other people there too. Bruno Bettelheim had his so-called "orthogenic school" for children, and lectured frequently. Hannah Arendt was teaching there too. I didn't take a course from her, but I attended a number of public lectures that she gave. It was a place where the world of the mind was huge and satisfying.

*Q: Your major was what?*

FAIRCHILD: It was history. I was mainly focused on Russian history at that point.

*Q: How did you view sort of the Soviet Union at that time?*

FAIRCHILD: I think I viewed the regime as a semi-criminal successor to the Czarist regime. If you study Russian history you notice immediately that the larger long-term international goals of the Russian state, whether it calls itself the Russian empire or the Soviet Union, are remarkably consistent.

*Q: If you want to be a secret policeman you can be a member of the Okhrana, or Chekka or NKVD without any particular wrenching of allegiance.*

FAIRCHILD: I think that's possible, and there must have been a number of people who moved from the security organization of one regime to that of another. There were a few such cases following the fall of the Shah in Iran. In Iran some people, not a great number, but some of them – including a few high ranking individuals – moved from SAVAK to SAVAMA without skipping a beat. While they may have been eased aside later on, and in some cases shot, it did happen. I guess I was focused on the Russianness of the Soviet Union. I realized that it constituted a major threat, and that we had this very active cold war going on, but I always thought somehow the dangerous element of our relations would ease over time.

*Q: Well then did, because it was politically important, did Israel ever sort of rear its head as sort of interest to you or not?*

FAIRCHILD: At that time no. I was aware of it, and I had friends in graduate school who had spent some time on a kibbutz in Israel. I didn't think very much about Middle East issues at that time, although I was vaguely aware of what was going on. I became much more interested later on, and I think what was the trigger for me occurred at my first post in Dakar in 1967 following or during the Six Day War, when I saw large numbers of Mauritians and Senegalese lining up at the Egyptian embassy volunteering to go fight. I thought "what possesses someone this far into Western Africa to want to go fight in this war?" So I thought I had better get more interested in

and informed on this subject. I also knew people in the Israeli embassy when I was in Dakar, and basically made the lazy assumption that since the early Zionist settlers and Holocaust survivors had caused the desert to bloom they were somehow more entitled to the land of Palestine than the Arab inhabitants were. Slowly, over time, those issues became of great interest to me. I will go into that later when we discuss more recent history.

*Q: What kind of master's program were you doing at Chicago? Was it a two-year course?*

FAIRCHILD: I suppose it could have been, but about half way through that first year, this would have been about August, I was called in one afternoon by Leopold Haimson. He said something like "I am not going to be here this coming year. I am going to Columbia because the University of Rochester has just bought away Michael Cherniavsky with their latest Eastman Kodak grant, and Chicago won't try to keep him. I am mad about it and am quitting." He was going to the Russian Institute at Columbia. I replied, "Well that sort of leaves me in the lurch doesn't it." To which he said, "No, you can switch to political science and work with Jeremy Azrael." I then said something like "No, I don't think I really want to be a political scientist." So I had to cast about, and one of the schools I rang up was Georgetown. There was a natural attraction there since I knew I eventually wanted to join the Foreign Service, so Washington DC was the place to be and Georgetown was the best school to attend in Washington. Mind you this is in late August, so the move had to be the very next month. Georgetown offered me what they called a "work-fellowship," in other words if I would give them 20 hours of work in the library each week, they would waive all tuition. That seemed like a pretty good deal. I remember calling Columbia, and they accepted me but with no money, and Harvard said they would like to think about me a bit longer. So, there being only these choices, I packed up my stuff, got on a bus, and came to Washington DC. That was the fall of 1964.

*Q: I would like to just go back while you were at North Carolina. Political science used to be like comparative governments and all of that. That is the political science I grew up in as a history major. But at some point it was beginning to turn very quantitative and all. How stood it when you were at North Carolina?*

FAIRCHILD: I can say for sure it was in the pre-quantitative period. It was in the era of what I would call comparative government systems. Even at Chicago Azrael's course in the Soviet State was almost devoid of quantitative stuff, except for the economic sector and how people basically lied with statistics. Although he maintained, and I think it is probably true, that even when people are exaggerating you can find some way to make an adjustment and figure out what the real production levels are, or the number of missiles, or whatever you are talking about. No, it was definitely not quantitative. I remember some books I read later, for example a book on Iran by Marvin Zonis, wherein there was a lot of quantitative stuff. For example, how many trips to Europe a specific subset of the Iranian elite made every year. I found that material interesting, but not very convincing as a genuine science.

*Q: Well then you were at Georgetown from 1964 to...*

FAIRCHILD: Until the end of 1966, when I left for my first diplomatic posting in Dakar, Senegal. My first reaction as I got into the course work at Georgetown was that the intellectual level didn't

seem to be quite as high or the lectures as stimulating as in Chicago. They had a number of what I would call professional émigrés teaching at Georgetown, e.g., there was a former member of the Polish diplomatic corps, Roman Debicki. He was a charming, old school gentleman, but his lectures were basically anti-Soviet homilies. Another of the professors was Lev Dobriansky, who was in addition to being professor there was a leading member of the Ukrainian-American community. Dobriansky later became a U.S. Ambassador to the Bahamas, under the Reagan Administration, and his daughter Paula ultimately became an Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and then an Under Secretary for Global Affairs under two subsequent Republican administrations. I only had two Jesuits teaching me. One was Father John Songster, who taught Russian literature. Father Frank Fadner was actually my mentor for my master's thesis, which I wrote on the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Russian intellectual Pyotr Chaadaev who is credited with initiating the great Westerner-Slavophil debates of that century. Father Fadner's specialty was Russian Intellectual History, especially 19<sup>th</sup> century. He wrote a book on pan-Slavism that is still considered a major seminal work, especially on the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Century Slavophiles. Father Fadner was also something of a showman, who always wore a red-lined cape as part of his priestly attire. But the actual head of the program was a layperson named Prince Cyril Toumanoff. Had Georgia been an independent country at that time, Cyril Toumanoff would have been king. Another professor, although I never had him for a course, was Toumanoff's uncle, Count Olgerd Cherbowitz-Wetzor of the Finnish nobility. There were just an awful lot of émigré folks like that teaching at Georgetown in those days. Both Toumanoff and his uncle were Knights of Malta, I mean members of the Sovereign Military Order of the Hospitaller Knights of St. John of Jerusalem. Whenever their priory was meeting they always showed up in class dressed in formal wear, black tie, and with the Maltese Cross of the Order in their lapel.

*Q: What did you concentrate on any particular area?*

FAIRCHILD: It was a program they called simply Russian Studies, so it was a combination of history, political science, economics, literature. In fact Georgetown was part of the graduate consortium, so I actually ended up taking one or two courses at American University, courses on Soviet economy. I didn't keep up the language studies, but one had to take a reading test. Apropos of that, I remember I had been interested in the pre-Bolshevik alphabet. I am not sure why, just intellectual curiosity, so I knew the older form of the alphabet. When they gave the reading test they had sort of a sneaky trick to play on us. One of the three articles we had to read was a pre-World War I piece written in the pre-Bolshevik alphabet. So, if you didn't know the old alphabet it could have been somewhat difficult to figure it out and hence to translate the article.

*Q: Were you able to make any contact with people in the Foreign Service while at Georgetown?*

FAIRCHILD: No. I remember a number of people who came to speak to classes or just to meet students. I was not in the School of Foreign Service, but they would occasionally have programs I attended. While I was still in graduate school I took the Foreign Service exam for the first time. I had actually taken it while at Chicago, and also took the oral exam at Chicago. But at that time I had opted for the USIA portion of it, still thinking about that impressive cultural attaché I had spoken to in my high school days. I did not pass the oral exam, however, and I remember the head of the interviewing team said something like "You know a lot, Mr. Fairchild, but you need to know more about your own country, how local elections work and related issues if you are going to be a

member of USIA.” So the next time I took the exams I thought maybe I should just get into straight diplomacy, because I thought I knew enough to satisfy myself about most issues even if I couldn’t go out and conduct programs at cultural centers. So I took the exam again while in graduate school at Georgetown, and the oral exam in the summer while I was writing my thesis having finished the coursework. And I did pass that time.

*Q: Do you recall any of the questions at all?*

FAIRCHILD: Oh yes, it was a fascinating but somewhat surreal experience. The oral exam occurred two or three weeks after my master’s comprehensive exam. I did very well on that, so I felt quite confident about myself during the Foreign Service oral exam, which lasted between 2 ½ and 3 hours. There was a break, of course, but it all seemed to go by much faster than that. There were three gentlemen in suits sitting behind a table in front of me. It was very formal, very inquisitorial. They had a chair out in the middle of the room in which I sat. I remember when I came into the room one of them said, “If you feel like smoking please go ahead.” I noticed immediately that there was no ashtray, so I assumed they wanted to see what I did with my cigarette. I was a smoker at the time, a nasty habit that I eventually gave up on December 5, 1980 – one of the better things I have done in my life. But I remember the questions, and they really covered the waterfront. It was all about international issues, specific country information, plus cultural and intellectual subjects. The disconcerting thing about it was once I started to answer a question and showed solid knowledge about the subject they said, “Thank you very much and let’s go on to this other subject.” They kept doing that all afternoon. They asked one question about recent Italian elections, and my reply was something like this. “I know that in Italy they have two ballots, and on the first one people tend to vote their hearts and that is why the Communists get a lot of votes. On the second one, the run-off ballot, people get a little more practical and think more seriously and that is why the Christian Democrats usually win.” But then I added “But frankly I don’t know enough about Italian politics to answer your question intelligently, so maybe we could go on to something else.” I noticed they looked at each other, without any expression, but it seemed to me that they approved of my honest response. There was also one member of the panel, who was actually a USIA officer, and he seemed inexplicably hostile or at least aggressive in his questioning. I wondered why he acted this way, and concluded that perhaps he is trying to see how I would react to someone who is not behaving in a very professional way. I just gave him straight answers. But he got to one set of questions about which he said, “Let’s pretend that you are the Soviet cultural attaché here. Which groups or individuals would you suggest bringing to the United States as part of a cultural program? For example what folk dancing group? What symphony orchestra, which ballet troupe.” Then he said, “Let’s do the flip side. You are now the American cultural attaché in Moscow. What groups, symphony orchestra, folksingers, and the like would you bring to Russia?” At one point he asked, “What about a saxophone player?” I said without hesitation, “Coleman Hawkins.” He then asked, “Not John Coltrane?” I said, “No, I think a tenor sax is much sweeter than an alto sax.” Or maybe it was the reverse; I can’t remember now. But whatever I said he looked at me approvingly and said, “Oh, you are so right.” From then on he was Mr. Sweetness and Light, and was quite friendly for the rest of the exam. I thought that very strange, and perhaps even a bit silly.

*Q: So you finished at Georgetown. When did you finish there?*

FAIRCHILD: I didn't actually get my degree until early 1968, February I think. I was writing my master's thesis over a long period of time, and in fact was still working on it when I received my first Foreign Service assignment....that was to Dakar, Senegal. That would have been in the fall of 1966. I should inject one personal comment here. While in graduate school I met a young woman, a Russian American...although she was considerably more Russian than American, and we ended up getting married in the fall of 1966. Her name was Ekaterina Sergeevna Smirnov, and I had to eventually re-orient my career focus at that point because she still had living relatives in the Soviet Union. Not close, but at least relatives. SY, the office of security was known as SY at the time, told me in fairly blunt terms, "Young man, you will never be assigned to the Soviet Union and probably not ever to Eastern Europe, so why don't you find a new geographic area of interest." I shifted to Africa because I had taken some courses in African history in college and it seemed interesting. Plus remember at that time in the 1960's African countries were becoming independent and were the focus of much hope in the West in general and in the U.S. in particular.

*Q: It was the era of the discovery of Africa.*

FAIRCHILD: That is right. Africa, of course, had been discovered by Africans for a lot longer, and then somewhat later by Europeans. The State Department just had discovered it too in the early 1960s. I remember hearing some perhaps apocryphal stories to the effect that we financed the establishment of several embassies in Africa in the early 1960's by selling a couple of staff apartment house buildings in Paris, and that the Department regretted it shortly thereafter. Not because they regretted opening embassies in Africa, but after about three or four years what they were paying in rents equaled the amount for which what they had sold the apartment buildings. So, at this time I was re-orienting my professional life toward Africa since I couldn't go to the Soviet Union. My wife Katya and I eventually divorced some years later, and each of us took different paths.

*Q: What was her background.*

FAIRCHILD: Well, it was quite fascinating. She was born in Harbin, Manchuria. Her father had come from a relatively well to do family, his father was a candy manufacturer and had a number of plants in Russia. After the revolution Katya's father had higher education forbidden to him as he had come from the wrong social class. He studied accounting and followed that as a trade, but then was drafted into the Red Army and stationed in the Soviet Far East. Sergei Smirnov was his name. At one point he and a buddy of his decided to go over the wall or over the hill, and they just basically went AWOL, traveled into China, and made their way to Harbin which had a Russian population – we would call them White Russians – of over 100,000 at that time.

*Q: It was a tremendous exodus there.*

FAIRCHILD: Her mother's family, Chukaiev by name, had been there a bit longer. That family went out east after the Revolution, following the retreat of the White armies, and they established themselves in Harbin. It was a family of six girls and one boy. The six sisters, one of whom was Katya's mother, were a very resilient, forward-looking bunch of girls. One studied English, another one studied Japanese – that part of China was under Japanese occupation and had been since the early 1930s, another learned Chinese, and one of the remaining sisters learned Spanish.

Katya was born in 1944, and I guess about a year later the Soviet Army came in and liberated that part of Manchuria from the Japanese. I remember my father in law telling me he was quite nervous when the Soviet army came in because he thought they would have some records on him and he would go straight in to the Gulag because he had gone AWOL. But that was not the case. In fact he told me the majority of the people who got arrested and deported were actually people who were active communists or younger men who had been suborned by the Japanese into doing spying missions for them. So he basically was quite nervous for a while until he realized that nobody would be coming to arrest him. The family applied for emigration in the early 1950's, but only received authorization to leave in 1956. Those four sisters I mentioned had a brother, Alexander, but he had gone west when they went east. He ended up in the United States, and during the war worked for the Office of War Information that eventually became USIA. He worked for USIA until his retirement, and it was he who served as their sponsor and brought the family here in 1956.

*Q: Well when you first joined the Foreign Service, there was an A-100 course wasn't there?*

FAIRCHILD: That's right.

*Q: You say it was about 80 people.*

FAIRCHILD: It was a big one. They told us it was the largest class to date in the history of the Foreign Service. Several of us looked at each other and joked, "Well that explains how we got in!" It was so big they divided us into two sections.

*Q: Do you have a class number?*

FAIRCHILD: Lange Schermerhorn and I were in the class together. We believe it was the 73<sup>rd</sup>. We and Steve Steiner, another classmate, sponsored a 40<sup>th</sup> reunion of this class in 2006 at DACOR-Bacon House. I can't guarantee that was the right number because our memories are a little fuzzy. I can tell you, however, who was in charge of it. Alex Davit was the chair, and Ralph Jones was his number two. I thought it was pretty well organized. Our favorite part of it was a frequently held session called Prerogatives and Perquisites. That was basically when Alex and Ralph sat with us and told "old war stories" which we found fascinating. It helped us learn the cultural aspects of the Foreign Service – meaning what to do, what not to do, to whom you have to tip your hat, that sort of thing. I remember when they announced our assignments; Tom Dunnigan was the person who did that. I don't know if Tom is still alive.

*Q: He died some time ago. Tom did quite a few oral histories for us.*

FAIRCHILD: I think he would have been quite good at that. He had as I recall a gentle southern accent. I will make a comment about southern accents a bit later when we talk about EERs (employee evaluation reports). But when he read out my assignment it sounded like something like Da-kah. I raised my hand and said, "Mr. Dunnigan, is that spelled with two C's or a K? He replied, "Well you are lucky Mr. Fairchild. It is with a K not with two C's."

*Q: I know Lange Schermerhorn was in your class. Lange and I served in Saigon together.*

FAIRCHILD: That would have been one of her early assignments, maybe her first.

*Q: I think her second. She was the first woman in Sri Lanka.*

FAIRCHILD: That's right, which we called Ceylon at the time. I served with Lange in Tehran later on, from 1975 through 1978. Lynne Lambert was there as well.

*Q: Lynne Lambert with whom I served in Athens.*

FAIRCHILD: It really is a small world, and a relatively small Foreign Service family.

*Q: It is a small world and a small family. I have interviewed both Lynne and Lange. I think you would find it quite interesting what they had to say about their time as economic officers giving advice to firms and when they were in Tehran.*

FAIRCHILD: I will make sure to read their oral histories.

*Q: What was your impression about the people you saw coming in at that time in the A-100 course. Were they sort of part of the 1960's generation, a bit iconoclastic and all that.*

FAIRCHILD: We were a bit iconoclastic, but not excessively so. We had ideas that would probably now be described as progressive. We all knew for whom we were going to work of course; it was the U.S. government. And I think we still had a lot of faith that the government would get things right, even though many of us had some contrary views about the Vietnam War at that point. We all seemed to be fairly serious. I don't remember anyone being a certifiable hippy type. Most of us looked like members of some major bank's junior executive club. We dressed conservatively, and I think we thought conservatively regarding foreign affairs – with the exception of Vietnam – even though we entertained progressive ideas on domestic issues. We were all very responsible people as well. I remember being impressed with the backgrounds and intellectual levels of my peers in that class.

*Q: So you had been at this point precluded at this point from working on Soviet matters, all Iron Curtain countries included. Where were you pointed, in your own mind anyway?*

FAIRCHILD: Well, I wasn't really very sure. I knew wanted to be an ambassador at some point. Even though that never happened I was at least Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) a couple of times and a chargé a couple of times too. But I thought I would make a go of African affairs, and I found Africa was quite interesting. One really felt that one could make a difference in Africa, both in terms of development and helping people as well as in assisting Africans opt for Western models and philosophies as opposed to the Soviet variety. After my first wife and I divorced and I had remarried, I talked to people in the Soviet area about getting an assignment in Russia. But it became obvious to me that, given the sort of geographical club structure prevalent at that time in the Department – at least for political officers or people that wanted to be political officers, even if one had a couple of tours elsewhere you had to start all over again at the bottom. Since I already had a certain investment in African affairs, I thought I should pursue that rather than start as an "apprentice" in the Soviet club.

*Q: So you went to Dakar, Senegal. How stood things at that time in Senegal? What was the situation?*

FAIRCHILD: Senegal had a very good reputation among Western countries as being a very responsible and reliable country. Leopold Sedar Senghor was the president and was very well respected. He was if I recall correctly the only non-French member of the Academie Francaise. He was a well-regarded poet, a former member of the French parliament, and in fact he helped draft the constitution for the Fourth Republic in France. Senegal, as you probably know, was one of the first if not the very first French colony in Africa, dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In fact after the French revolution the four “communes” in Senegal – the towns of Dakar, Rufisque, Thies, and St. Louis – were actually considered part of France and the people there elected representatives to the French parliament. That was modified a bit later for various reasons, but Senegal has a long association with France. Senghor was looked on as a leader among Francophone African chiefs of state. Dakar received a number of visits while we were there from important French personalities, e.g., political personalities like Michel Debre would come visit and consult with Senghor. It was still very much in the French cultural and political zone of influence. For example, when we were there, there was relatively new theater called Teatre Daniel Sorano. We got current French stars at the time, people like Francoise Hardy and Johnny Hallyday. I think the aged Tino Rossi even showed up once, drawing an older crowd of course. But at that time there were about 30,000 French people still living in Senegal, of whom over 20,000 lived in the Dakar peninsula.

*Q: Well the U.S. Consul General in Dakar really covered most of Francophone Africa during the colonial period. I guess it was still considered pretty much the pre-eminent post in Francophone Africa, wasn't it?*

FAIRCHILD: Absolutely. It was also the former capital of French West Africa. Abidjan was beginning to emerge as a power in the 1960s, maybe because of economic interests there. There were the important cocoa and coffee crops in Ivory Coast, and there were also a lot of industries – even if many of them were final assembly as opposed to indigenous industries. Textile production was very important too, and Ivorian textiles were exported to many African countries. And Felix Houphouët-Boigny, the Ivorian president, was at the time right behind Senghor as a leading Francophone Africa political leader.

*Q: Who was our ambassador when you were there?*

FAIRCHILD: When I first arrived it was William Rifkin, for whom the Rifkin award was named. I found him a fascinating if somewhat rough hewn character. If I remember correctly he was a former law partner of Arthur Goldberg from Chicago, before Goldberg was on the Supreme Court. Rifkin had in fact been a political appointee ambassador to Luxemburg under John Kennedy. Then he wanted another embassy, and he was sent to Senegal under President Johnson. I think he was a frustrated man in Dakar because he was high-powered, high-energy Chicago lawyer. When he said jump he wanted everybody to jump. Of course, all we Americans did jump, but the Senegalese have a much more languid approach to life. They didn't jump as fast as he wanted, ever. Also Ambassador Rifkin smoked a lot, and that wasn't good for his health. He was also disarmingly direct, at least he was with me. I remember when I called on him the day after I arrived, he looked



at me and he said. “You are going to need two things right away. First you will need a car, and if you don’t have enough funds of your own I will be happy to lend you at no interest the money you need to buy one, because you have to get around. Especially since you are starting off in the consular section. The second thing you need is a haircut.” Slave to fashion that I was, I had a fairly long hair, much longer than it is today, and certainly much more on top. And I certainly needed my car three or three and a half months later when Ambassador Rivkin woke up one Sunday morning and fell over dead of a massive heart attack. On that sad day my first assignment was to go out to the N’Gor beach area near the Embassy’s weekend beach house to tell guests whom he had invited to a picnic that the picnic was off because our ambassador was dead. I will always remember another thing that happened with Ambassador Rivkin. For good reason I had the reputation of having the best French among the younger people in the embassy. He came over to me at a reception in his residence, grabbed me by the arm, and said, “Quick, how do you say scholarship in French.” So I replied “bourse.” The Ambassador’s reaction was immediate – “No, bourse means stock market.” So, as politely as I could, I said, “Yes, it does, but it also means scholarship.” He grumbled and walked away, with a disgusted look on his face. The next day he called me into his office and said, “I just wanted to apologize, you were right. It does mean both. Thanks.”

*Q: That in a way is significant to talk about people because there are not many of these high charging types who will do that.*

FAIRCHILD: My second ambassador who came in several months later was L. Dean Brown, Lewis Dean Brown.

*Q: How was he?*

FAIRCHILD: I quickly became an acolyte in the Dean Brown church. He was a wonderful person. I liked him very much. He had a slightly gruff manner but I thought he was a superb boss. He was the one who taught me that if you are unhappy with a subordinate’s behavior you tell him so in private. But if you are happy with it praise him in public. That was one of the basic lessons that I remember learning from him. He was 48 years old at the time, which was considered a very young age at which to be ambassador – at least then it was. He had worked in African affairs on the Congo desk back during the early, violent days of that country’s independence. He had also become quite active in AFSA, the American Foreign Service Association, and I remember his telling me once he thought he was sent to Dakar as ambassador to get him out of town because he was known as one of the young Turks at the time. Somebody apparently thought he was more trouble than he was worth, and would be less trouble if he were out of Washington, although I am sure he enjoyed and liked Dakar.

*Q: Well you were a vice counsel basically.*

FAIRCHILD: That was the title, but the Department had a really terrific program at the time I was assigned to Dakar, not as a consular officer but as a “central complement officer.” What that meant was that one did some time in all sections of the embassy and one’s mentor and supervisor for that first assignment was the DCM. My DCM for most of the time I was there was Alan Lukens, who is a good friend and I think also was a very good mentor.

*Q: China hand, wasn't he?*

FAIRCHILD: No, I think he has done mostly African things. In fact, he was Ambassador in Brazzaville at one point. He was in Denmark as DCM also, also Turkey, but I think there has been a pretty much African focus to Alan's career. But the central complement officer assignment worked such that I would do three months in each section of the embassy. That was during the first year. Then having discovered what I liked, I could express a preference for which section I wanted for my second year. The management of the embassy would also express its preference as to where they needed me. So I did each section of the embassy, but as I had an extra three or four months I was also sent to the USIA cultural center to work for three or four months. That was very interesting and an enormous amount of fun because I was working mainly on the cultural side. That was the time of the first African tour, under U.S. Government cultural affairs auspices, of the Alvin Ailey Dance Company. So while I wasn't exactly Sol Hurok for this operation, I got involved setting up the program for them, organizing hospitality, working on related advertising, and basically everything connected with the company's appearances in Dakar. It was just a phenomenal experience for a 25-year old junior officer.

*Q: From your perspective how was it received?*

FAIRCHILD: The Alvin Ailey Dance Company was very well received. The audience was probably more French than Senegalese, but the Senegalese were certainly there in force for all the performances. The dancers were lionized socially in town for two or three days.

*Q: This was the preeminent African American ballet troupe.*

FAIRCHILD: They did more modern dance than anything else.

*Q: Well what were your impressions of the political life in Senegal?*

FAIRCHILD: Senegal I think was typical of most Francophone African countries in that there was only one political party, the UPS or *Union Progressiste Senegalaise*. It was basically a socialist party totally dominated by Senghor and his lieutenants. I think they were reasonably liked, but there was not a lot of space for people with other political ideas. The party leadership had to, as I think any party leadership would in Senegal, have some kind of accommodation with the large Muslim brotherhoods of Senegal. The largest and most powerful brotherhood was the Mourides, "mouride" coming from an Arabic word meaning follower. The Mourides have their own caliph, whose capital is a town called Touba. The areas controlled by the Mourides religiously and to a great extent secularly correspond with the main peanut growing areas of Senegal. That is the country's major export product. Senegal also has phosphates, but they came on line after I left. Following Senghor and Abdou Diouf, who was his successor, that link with the brotherhoods – especially the Mourides – may have broken down a bit. Previously candidates who were not endorsed by the Mourides were not going to win, but after the end of the Senghor/Diouf period that became less important. So, Senegal was essentially a conservative, one-party African state.

*Q: What was the feeling in our embassy; did we feel it was the French who were calling the shots or not there?*

FAIRCHILD: I once heard the French ambassador at the time, Jean Vyau de la Garde, refer to Senegal as “*notre chasse privée*” – our private hunting preserve. They certainly acted that way and they were certainly quite dominant. We were trying to make inroads at least offer some alternatives, seek commercial opportunities, provide economic assistance both developmental and humanitarian where needed, although our aid program was a relatively small at the time. So I guess we were more or less content to play Avis to France’s Hertz.

*Q: You are speaking about the traditional rivalry between two automobile rental companies, where Avis, I am putting this in for the reader. Avis used to have an ad saying, “We are number 2, we try harder.” Hertz was the big automobile rental company. Did you maneuver within the political and economic world there as a young officer to get out and get information?*

FAIRCHILD: Yes, and with relative ease. I assume you mean get out among the Senegalese, because the diplomatic community is always ready to trade views and opinions and gossip. Yes, I think in my case that job was facilitated by Dean Brown’s having made me the officer responsible for something called the Ambassador’s Special Self Help Fund. This was a fund that at the time, depending on the size of the country, was between \$50,000 to \$100,000 that the ambassador was allowed to use for local small projects that would be helpful to a community but would also show the United States’ interest in helping ordinary people in that country. For example, if a community had managed to raise enough money to build its own schoolhouse but didn’t have enough extra funds to put a corrugated tin roof on the building, we would buy the tin roof for them. Then there would be a formal dedication ceremony that the ambassador would often attend. So, I went about the country checking on the progress and results of previous projects and trying to start new ones. Many of these projects were actually suggested by Peace Corps volunteers. Once the fund got known better local authorities would steer local communities toward our embassy to ask for help. These were relatively small amounts of money, but working on these projects I traveled pretty much all over the country. In doing such projects you also develop a wide range of contacts, and you of course are able talk to them about other subjects as well....including political, economic, commercial, well just all other subjects.

*Q: Did you see or did our embassy see a growing problem between the Islamic side of the country and the non-Islamic side?*

FAIRCHILD: That was not the case in Senegal because Senegal I would guess was 98% to 99% Muslim. There are a fair number of Senegalese who are Christian, and there may even be a few of those who are in the 98-99% who are animist more than Muslim. The President, Leopold Senghor was raised as a Catholic, and indeed there was a small Catholic minority. Among the Muslims at least I think there were three major groups: those who were unaffiliated with the brotherhoods, and then the largest brotherhood was the Mourides, and the Tidjani were a smaller Muslim brotherhood.

Most of the Senegalese seemed to have a relationship with the local Muslim cleric; I guess in other societies you might call them a mullah. They are known as “*marabouts*” in Senegal. One consults them for spiritual advice, or if one needs – and this is where the animist legacy comes into play – a

charm or amulet to ward off certain evil things or if you need a set of prayers to make a certain thing happen, one sees the marabout and makes a donation to his establishment.

*Q: Well were there any threats to Senegal from the surrounding countries or elsewhere that we could see at the time?*

FAIRCHILD: No, none at all. Mauritania posed a small threat in that slavery was still prevalent in Mauritania. Occasionally Mauritanian bands would come across the river in the north and kidnap Senegalese children to be raised as slaves. But there was no serious threat other than that either from Mauritania or Mali. There was still a Portuguese colony south of Senegal, Guinea Bissau, where there was an active insurgency underway. Of course right in the middle of Senegal itself there is this small country known as the Gambia which is essentially an overgrown river bank or as National Geographic once described it, a “long arthritic finger thrust into the belly of Senegal.” It is a former British colony, very small, and never posed any threat to Senegal.

*Q: Was Senegal were Goree was? And had the “Roots phenomenon” started yet, meaning African Americans many of whom whose ancestors left Africa as slaves coming back to seek their roots?*

FAIRCHILD: That was the Alex Haley series. That was not until the 1970’s. I don’t think there was very much African-American tourism or roots seeking at that time I was there. There was a museum on the island of Goree, a museum in the so-called *maison d’esclaves* or slave house. You could actually see where people were chained before being put in the long boats that went out to the larger ships that were anchored offshore. It is a very grim place. You just can’t imagine how many people must have gone through that fort.

*Q: How stood things in Senegal with our war in Vietnam, because a lot of Senegalese served in the military there. There was more of a tie than say many other places. It was a very unpopular war?*

FAIRCHILD: Most Senegalese chose not to raise that subject. If they did they were generally journalists, and they did it in a very polite way. Most were against the war, however. I think this says as much about the Senegalese character as it does the tenor of the times. There were a fair number of Vietnamese in Senegal. Dakar itself as I recall had five or six Vietnamese restaurants, all of which did a pretty good business at the time. I think the Vietnamese were there professionally and probably in positions that were carryovers from the colonial times, meaning education or perhaps civil service. The Vietnam War was probably more of an issue for serious and animated discussion for Americans than among others. I just don’t recall it ever being put on the spot by someone who was criticizing our policy in Vietnam.

*Q: How did you feel about that, our involvement in Vietnam at the time?*

FAIRCHILD: I thought that we could have done better – we could have had a better, smarter policy. I suppose not knowing much about Vietnam I came up with notions similar to this: if we could make an accommodation with someone like Tito in Yugoslavia, why not with Ho Chi Minh? From what little I knew I didn’t think Ho Chi Minh was the uncritical servant of the Russians or the Chinese anymore than Tito was. I realize before the break with the Soviets that Tito was viewed as one of the most faithful servants of the Comintern there was, but when he did have the

break he didn't become a free marketer by any means, yet we were able to have an accommodation with him as part of a larger Cold War approach to opportunities like the Yugoslav case. Part of that Yugoslav-Soviet rift undoubtedly dated from the war. I understand that when the Soviet Army went through a corner of Yugoslavia they treated the Yugoslavs pretty much the way they treated Germans in the East or the Poles. They stole what they wanted, raped the women, and just did whatever they felt like doing. That didn't sit well with the Yugoslavs; they were looking for much more comradely treatment from the Red Army than that. And when they complained to the Soviets about it, they were rebuffed by Stalin himself who thought they were at best ingrates to worry over such trifles. But in the Vietnamese situation, I thought we could have profited from the historical problems between Vietnam and China and the less than fully supportive Soviet stance toward their Vietnamese comrades. It also seemed that we were backing the side that clearly didn't have its act together and wasn't a very good long term bet. Shades of China, perhaps.

*Q: How did you find living in Senegal?*

FAIRCHILD: Well, it was not like living anywhere in the States or in Europe, but it was pretty good. As I served in more African posts later on I think it was about the best I had, certainly in terms of creature comforts. The first apartment we lived in – and most of the staff lived in apartments except for those who had official residences like the Ambassador, the DCM, and I think the Public Affairs Officer – was simple but quite nice. It was a fifth or sixth floor apartment directly across the street from the Catholic cathedral, which was fine except for Sunday morning when they started ringing the bells quite early. Even if you didn't want to, you had to get up about 6:00 because of those bells. The second apartment was one we inherited from the person who was my first boss in the rotation there. He was also one of the best bosses I ever had in the Foreign Service and a wonderful man named Joe Cheevers, Joseph Patrick Cheevers.

*Q: I knew Joe.*

FAIRCHILD: Joe was probably the nicest and undoubtedly the most civilized boss I ever had. When Joe and his family left we took his apartment, which was a second floor apartment on the Avenue Carde. It was eventually renamed the Avenue Jean XXIII after the Pope. It had a nice view from the balcony in back of the Ministry of Finance. From that balcony we could see the various African girl friends of the Minister, Jean Colin, a Frenchman who had taken Senegalese nationality and was mayor of Joal at the time – Joal being Senghor's hometown. One of the standing jokes in the community was to ask me how many girlfriends did you count this afternoon going into the Ministry of Finance. It was good housing, however, if not luxurious. As I recall we had air conditioning in the two bedrooms but not in the rest of the house. But it was quite comfortable.

*Q: Well now you were married at the time.*

FAIRCHILD: Yes, to Katya Smirnov.

*Q: How did your wife find diplomatic life?*

FAIRCHILD: Well I think she enjoyed life in Dakar pretty well. We had a number of friends, a good social life. She chafed a bit about some of the chores that American diplomatic wives were not only encouraged to do but also expected to do. For example, making and delivering hors d'oeuvres for cocktail parties at the Ambassador's or Chargé's residence or showing up for various teas that were probably less interesting to her than doing other things like volunteer work. She was sensitive about her foreign background, as I think many Foreign Service wives with foreign backgrounds are. She didn't understand why some people got nervous about having Russian traditional food served at our dinner parties. Her response was, "If people don't mind eating spaghetti and meatballs, why should they mind eating *pazharskiye cotlety*?" But I think there was a certain hard feeling among some members of the Embassy family about her being Russian. While not being arrogant or condescending, she didn't have much sympathy or good feeling for people who had culturally insensitive attitudes toward her because of her Russian background.

*Q: What about was the Soviet and Communist Chinese presence in Senegal?*

FAIRCHILD: Yes, we had a Soviet embassy. I don't recall how large it was, but I remember at one party at the American ambassador's residence we met a man named Boris Samsonov who was the KGB *rezident*, the head of the KGB station in the Soviet embassy there. He was a very handsome man, and spoke very good French. He didn't speak any English, however. At a reception early in our assignment, I noticed he was talking to my wife; he had sort of cornered her. It turned out later he was fishing for information on her family, but she didn't tell him anything about them. As he left he was saying good night to everyone, and after saying good night to me in French he turned to my wife and said in Russian "I hope to see you again. Be sure to tell Albert everything we talked about." She replied, "I will. Of course, I will; I always do." He wasn't pushy after that, and we did not see him or his wife socially. I think that was probably the only serious conversation either of us had with him. The Chinese were, I am trying to remember, I think only the Chinese Nationalists were there at that time. My memory is a little vague on that. I remember the Chinese at later posts. In fact in the Central African Republic there was a night and day difference with our relations with the Chinese from one day to the next, when I guess the word came out from Beijing to start being nice to the Americans. I believe this was in 1979 or 1980. They were standoffish most of time since our arrival, and then one day they were just as friendly as one could wish, they would come over to us at receptions and initiate conversations, and even started inviting us to dinners. It was just totally different.

*Q: Did you get out into the countryside or the bush, whatever you call it?*

FAIRCHILD: Yes, mostly through my work as the Self-Help Fund officer, but also I was designated as the "publications procurement officer", buying maps and other publications. Occasionally there was a visitor from the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research who was interested in buying publications, but also in visiting the country and talking to people. For example the French had a branch of the *Institut Geographique Nationale* in Dakar that did mineral studies and related surveys. They were happy to share all their publications with us, some of which dated from late colonial times. I suppose we could have gotten those things in Paris, but it was perhaps more convenient to get them there. I remember escorting the person who came from the Department to buy some publications around on two trips. I would look for the things myself, and almost everything was published in Dakar. I remember also going once as an unofficial

embassy representative to the “Magal,” the annual speech by the grand caliph of the Mourides. There is this huge Mosque complex in Touba, the capital of the Mouride area in Senegal. When I was there the French Ambassador was also present, and one or two other embassies were also represented. My task was just basically to go, see and be seen, and listen to and report on the speech.

*Q: You left there when?*

FAIRCHILD: I left there in the late spring of 1969. I transferred back to the Department where, thanks to Ambassador Brown’s recommendation, I became one of two staff assistants in the Africa Bureau’s front office.

*Q: OK, well looking at the time this is a good place to stop I think and we will pick this up in 1969 when you have come back to Washington to the Africa bureau. I put at the end here where we are so we know where to pick it up.*

FAIRCHILD: That’s fine.

*Q: Today is 24 January 2012 with Al Fairchild. You said you had a few things to add.*

FAIRCHILD: Yes, we left off with my having left Dakar to go back to the Department in the spring of 1969. We covered my background and education and events in Dakar. I think there are two things I would like to add about background and education particularly about university, and then a couple of short things about Dakar that I neglected to mention last time. I think they are important both because of the history involved as well as events that shaped me for better or worse.

When I was at university, in the summer of 1963 I decided to take most of my savings and go on a summer trip to Europe. For most of the time involved I was banging around on my own, and for several weeks I was with Dennis Sweeny – a friend from UNC, and his brother, Martin. They had hooked up with me when we first went to York from London, both to see York and attend the biannual York festival. The Sweeney brothers eventually rented a car later in the summer in Switzerland, and I went around with them sharing gasoline costs. We covered a lot of ground. I broke off in York to go establish a “beach head” in Rome because we wanted to attend the coronation of Pope Paul VI. I traveled first, using my two-month Eurail pass – that back then only cost \$125. I found a *pensione* for us in Rome, and a few days later the brothers Sweeny arrived. So we did the papal coronation, which we were told was the first ever conducted outdoors, and then we went to Zurich, Geneva, Dijon, and Paris. I remember vividly a mustard laden lunch consisting mostly of ham and cheese sandwiches that we had there in Dijon. We eventually went to the Basque country in France and Spain, and to Pamplona. There of course we all ran before the bulls, on two separate days. The second time we were considerably more sober, and did a far better job. For the rest of the summer I went alone to places in Germany and Scandinavia, and spent some time in Yugoslavia – specifically in Slovenia and Croatia. There were earthquakes that summer in Yugoslavia that messed up the rail connections throughout the entire country.

*Q: Which summer was this?*

FAIRCHILD: Summer of 1963.

*Q: There was a bad earthquake in Skopje.*

FAIRCHILD: That is correct. It disrupted all of the rail connections, and some of the road connections. My Eurail pass was not valid in Yugoslavia, so I had to pay my way on the train. But things were quite inexpensive in Yugoslavia then. I remember paying \$1.80 per day for a lovely room, including a full breakfast, at the Grand Hotel Toplice in Bled.

*Q: I know I was there. I was head of the consular section in Belgrade. I went down and spent two weeks with an Army MASH hospital outside of Skopje.*

FAIRCHILD: I can imagine it was pretty devastating. I read about these earthquakes, and knew there was extensive damage. Also while in Germany I went to Berlin with some guys I met at a youth hostel in Hanover, and went with them into East Berlin for a day. That was interesting, and that day trip along with the time spent in Yugoslavia may have been what caused my security clearance when I came into the Foreign Service to take a little bit longer than it might have otherwise. While in East Berlin we even attended a tent fair set up to celebrate the 70<sup>th</sup> birthday of “Our Beloved Comrade Walter Ulbricht” – the then head of the East German government. But the point of relating all these European travels is simply to say that they contributed substantially to my decision that I wanted to combine travel and public service in my later life, and so the summer of 1963 was quite determinant in the course of my life.

The other thing I wanted to discuss, or rather add some detail about, was my decision to join a particular fraternity while at UNC. I pledged the fraternity in 1961, and became a full brother in 1962.

*Q: What fraternity was that?*

FAIRCHILD: It is called St. Anthony Hall, but goes by the Greek letters Delta Psi. I think that was a good experience for me because it taught me how to get along with a core group of diverse people, about 35 brothers and pledges at the time. The fraternity experience thus gave me whatever sort of incipient political skills you get from making your way in such a group. My fraternity brother and roommate for one year, Matt Weisman, often joined with me to play peacemaker between or among small factions in the larger group, and even though the whole fraternity was only about 35 young men there were a number of very contentious issues. The emphasis on literary duties, which I discussed earlier, and academic achievement helped me learn not to be embarrassed about using my intellectual skills to exert a constructive influence over others. Of course some of the friendships I made at that time are still active, and are probably closer than some formed in later in life.

There are a couple of other things about Dakar I wanted to mention. I think there were three events or experiences that were important “learning moments” for me. In 1967 there was an Inter-parliamentary Union meeting in Dakar. Various parliamentarians from Western Europe, Asia, the Western Hemisphere, and from even the Soviet Union attended these annual sessions. They did,



after all they have a parliament. The American delegation was composed of three senators and seven congressmen, all of whom were accompanied by their wives. This was my first experience with that dreaded thing known as a CODEL, Congressional Delegation. The Embassy assigned me to stay at the Hotel N’Gor with the group for virtually their entire one-week visit to Dakar. One can learn all kinds of interesting lessons in life when you are up close and personal with people, and I certainly did during that week. Senator B. Everett Jordan from North Carolina was there and I was asked to take special care of him since I was from North Carolina and my mother had known his wife. Senator Gordon Allott from Colorado was there as well. Among the Congressmen, the leader of the group was Emilio Daddario from Connecticut. He was a very impressive man. Congressman Ed Derwinski was there too. He was quite active in the delegation, and I remember also his wife giving a real tongue lashing once to the colonel who was with the group as principal hand-holder. The CODEL had an air force plane to transport them, and the colonel’s job was to make sure they all were kept happy. One afternoon the colonel had offered Mrs. Derwinski some innocuous compliment about her knitting or needlepoint, and she said something like, “It is not beautiful, and you know damn well it is the ugliest needlepoint in the world.” He backed out of the room as Mrs. Derwinski noted in saltier language her displeasure at his generally unctuous and sycophantic behavior. I made a mental note that there was clearly no good purpose to be served in offering Mrs. Derwinski anything but total candor about any subject she raised. Just give her the straight opinion, and I had occasion to do so the next day when she asked me if a trip to the local artisanal market was worth her time. My reply was something like “If you’re interested in well crafted gold filigree work, it’s worth a visit. Otherwise, no.”

Also I think I mentioned that my first assignment was as a “central complement officer,” whereby one worked in each section of the embassy. My first assignment was the consular section, and that’s where I worked for Joe Cheevers. Later on, not too long after Ambassador Dean Brown had arrived, I was actually working in another section when I had a call from him about 11:00 on a Sunday night. He began by apologizing for bothering me since I was not the duty officer, but he thought I was the one to do this. His French neighbor had just dropped by and said he heard that a dozen American sailors had been arrested for murder and were in the first arrondissement lockup. So he wanted me to go down to the jail and sort it all out. So I said, “All right, I will do it.” I had no idea what I was going to do. I also asked, “Should I call you back tonight and let you know what happened?” He said, “Hell no, just tell me in the morning how you fixed it.” That was that. So I went downtown, and in fact there were ten merchant mariners who had been drinking in a bar outside of which someone had the misfortune of being murdered. The police, as is typical in many countries, just rounded up everybody in sight and took them all in to get their statements. Unfortunately the police didn’t speak English and none of the sailors spoke French. So they were just facing each other and didn’t know quite what to do when I walked in. The fact that Senegalese police had automatic weapons was also a reason for the uncommonly quiet demeanor of these sailors. This episode is a good example of why a minimum of 3+ language skills are really necessary, because I had to determine quickly what was the real problem and what was necessary to solve it. I told the sailors that the police just wanted a statement from them. They all said something like, “Oh we didn’t hear or see anything.” I said, “Come on guys, you are in a bar and somebody is shot to death outside. You must have at least heard something, at least a shot or two. That could be your statement.” So the statement was laboriously typed up, and they all signed it, following which the police released them. At that point the merchant mariners decided I was the greatest person in the world, and insisted on buying me a drink. I wasn’t quite sure how to handle

this because they obviously had drunk quite a bit already. So, I said, “Well why don’t we go down to the Taverne du Port, which is quite close to where your ship is. I will let you buy me a drink, but you have to promise me that you will go straight back to the ship after that.” Thankfully they agreed, and we went down to the port area, had a fine old time for several liquid minutes, and I then watched them stagger off to board their ship. I think I got home about 2:00 in the morning, and slept the sleep of the just.

Last but not least, there was an incident at the end of my tour in Dakar that is best described as one of those funny reverse cultural twist stories. Making my farewell calls, I went to make a call on the deputy chief of protocol in the foreign ministry. I had worked with him on a couple of projects, including the CODEL mentioned earlier and some tricky visa cases. He was waxing eloquently, making excessive use of the subjunctive tense, about what a great fellow I was and what a fine job I had done. Then as I got up to leave he said, “Please before you leave, send me a picture of your queen.” I thought at first that I had misunderstood what he said, but then I realized he had me confused with my close friend Peter Gregory-Hood at the British Embassy. Peter is tall and thin, and I was already starting to show some of the weight that I now carry. Peter had a very strong Oxbridge accent in French, whereas I didn’t have much of an accent at all. I decided to not make it complicated, and promised send over the photo of Her Majesty as soon as possible. After returning to the Embassy, I rang up my friend Peter who promised to send a picture of the queen – which he did – and in an envelope marked “On Her Britannic Majesty’s Service.” But attached to it he put one of my calling cards, which he happened to have, and wrote in the corner “PPC,” which means “*pour prendre conge*,” or essentially “to say farewell.” I still wonder if Monsieur Protocol ever noticed the disconnect between a card from the American embassy and a photo of Her Majesty the Queen.

*Q: OK, now we are picking this up now, this is when.*

FAIRCHILD: It would have been in the spring, March of 1969. I had been assigned back to the Department, on Dean Brown’s recommendation, as one of the two staff assistants in the AF front office. The assistant secretary at the time was Joseph Palmer II, who was shortly thereafter named to be ambassador to Libya. The person who was departing as ambassador to Libya, David Newsom, was coming back to Washington to take Palmer’s place as Assistant Secretary for African Affairs.

*Q: How stood things. You mentioned Libya. Was northern Africa part of the African bureau?*

FAIRCHILD: It was, and was known then as AF/N. I think the Maghreb may still be known as AF/N even though it is now part of the NEA Bureau. My recollection is that it became part of the NEA bureau after the 1967 war, but I am not sure. But as Mr. Newsom had his own choices for staff aides, I had to cast about for another job. Perhaps because of my recent experience in Dakar, I was selected to be desk officer for Senegal, Mali and Gambia.

*Q: Well in the first place during the time that you were staff assistant to Joe Palmer, how did you find him, what was he like, and what were your experiences there?*

FAIRCHILD: He had a very imposing presence. He was a very big man physically, tall as well, and had a great booming voice. I was very impressed with him, and I think I would have been even if I had many more years under my belt at the time instead of only a few years as a junior officer. Staff aides had to do a number of daily duties, for example set up the secure phone equipment, and review the cables that came in overnight and sort them out into three stacks. One was “read immediately,” another was “this is important but read second,” and finally there was “all the other stuff.” Mr. Palmer was always very grateful about that, and told us so frequently. I think he tried to give us pointers too on how we could do everything better, realizing the limitations imposed by our relative lack of experience. C. Robert Moore, formerly Ambassador to Mali, was his principal deputy. Tom Quimby was also there, although I forget exactly what his responsibilities were. Being staff aide was one of those jobs where we split the day. One person would come in at 6:00 in the morning and start on the cables, and leave sometime in the afternoon. The other one came in toward lunchtime and stayed until the cows came home, or Mr. Palmer said, “You may go now.”

*Q: What was ticking when you were doing that job in Africa?*

FAIRCHILD: Well there were a number of things going on, the troubles in Nigeria, the Biafra civil war, or rather the civil war in which Biafra fought against the state of Nigeria. Things were relatively calm in Senegal. In Mali on my watch there was a military coup. In the Gambia, not very much happened; there was little political activity and President Dawda Jawara seemed to enjoy widespread if not universal support. Our ambassador in Dakar at the time was still Dean Brown. One of the anomalies of the Foreign Service that I learned about rather quickly was that when it was time to do the annual efficiency reports, the employee appraisal reports, I was told that I had to do the first draft on Dean Brown. So I went from being the lowest person on the totem pole in Dakar to the one who would do the first draft of the ambassador’s EER. I gave him a very good report, and I don’t believe there were many changes made as the deputy assistant secretaries reviewed what I had written. In Mali at the time I came on we had Edward Clark as ambassador. He was followed by Robert Blake, who was coming from Paris where he had been DCM. In the Gambia I believe it was still John Loughran, who was not *chargé d’affaires ad interim* but what I would call *chargé d’affaires in secula seculorum* because at the time we never thought we would have more than a *chargé* in the Gambia. It was actually our ambassador in Dakar who was accredited to Bathurst, as Banjul was known then. I also had a lot of interaction with the two embassies, Senegalese and Malian embassies in Washington. At one point President Senghor came for a working visit. “Working visit” meant that he got to stay at Blair House and there was a White House meeting with President Nixon, but there was no official state dinner or any grand reception. There was a dinner at Blair House that David Newsom actually hosted. I was invited for that, much to my pleasure, even though I was sitting considerably below the salt at that dinner. I was also much honored after dinner when Senghor himself gave me something I had requested of the Senegalese Ambassador when he asked me what I would like as a small gift commemorating the visit – a book of Senghor’s poetry, translated into English by former American Ambassador to Dakar Mercer Cooke. The book was inscribed “*A Monsieur Albert Fairchild, en homage attentive,*” and signed by Senghor. There was also a bit of a set-to at the White house meeting, because just as they were about to go into the President’s office National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger closed the door in David Newsom’s face to exclude him from the meeting. Mr. Newsom was livid, and went to look for the car in which he had come over to the White House. He had ridden to the White House with Marion Smoak, Chief of Protocol, who had taken the car and had

gone back to the Department alone. So Mr. Newsom had to walk back to the Department, and arrived steaming. I happened to be just outside of his office, and he said, "Fairchild, come in here." He proceeded to tell me about these events, and then said, "Well what have you got to say for yourself?" I didn't know what to say, but ventured something like "Mr. Newsom, I have even less control over Henry Kissinger than I do over the Chief of Protocol." He said, "You are right. I had to blow off steam. Unfortunately you were the only one here to take it, but you took it well." So that was the end of that.

*Q: Did we have anything of importance going on then with Senegal or Mali?*

FAIRCHILD: Well I think most of our interests were humanitarian at the time. Probably still are. Also we thought that the Senegalese could be helpful in a regional sense. They were very much in the Western camp, and so within the Cold War context could carry on good work to other African nations. With the Malians I think we were principally trying to get to know the new members of the government. We had a few come to the U.S. on international visitor grants. The U.S. was also trying to steer them into having elections as soon as possible and getting civilian control of the government back in place. In the Gambia we had a very small aid program. I went twice to New York for the annual UN General Assembly meetings, and it was there that I met with the Gambians. The Gambians in those days recognized that they had few resources to waste on a diplomatic presence in the Western Hemisphere. So, they came for the UNGA and I would go up there and meet with them. I remember that I entertained them for lunch at the Saint Anthony Club on 64<sup>th</sup> Street, that being a nice club that my fraternity had in the City in those days. The Gambian officials seemed very appreciative of that personal aspect to our New York encounters.

*Q: Were we still practicing the policy of denial or trying to keep the Soviets from getting too enmeshed in these states?*

FAIRCHILD: Yes, absolutely. This was around the time when the Soviets were trying to get the Guineans to give them a submarine base or at least let them use Guinean port facilities to service their submarines. We were pushing hard in the other direction, of course. The Guineans never did accede to the Russians, although they used that situation to extort some things from us. One would not have expected otherwise.

This reminds me of an interesting anecdote. Whenever our U.S. ambassadors were in town from any of these countries those of us who were desk officers would gather around at the day to discuss issues with them and, as youngsters, learn from our elders. I remember one session with Ambassador Albert Sherer when we were talking about some Soviet related issues. In addition to myself there were Jerry North, the desk officer for Guinea, and Charlie Twining, who had Ivory Coast and some other countries. At one point Sherer mentioned that he had raised the subject we were discussing with Guinean President Sekou Toure, and that Toure said that whatever we thought was the case was simply not true. I remember saying something like, "Well perhaps he was lying to you," to which Sherer replied "Oh no, Sekou would never lie to me." The three of us just looked at each other, and I think Jerry North said, "Why not." At that point we all laughed and Ambassador Sherer realized that perhaps he was putting a little too much stock in the personal relationship he had with one of the nastier dictators in Africa.

*Q: Was Islam a factor while you were there?*

FAIRCHILD: Not certainly in the negative way extremist jihadism is today. Senegal is about 98% Muslim, although there was no sectarian strife among the Senegalese – either of a Muslim versus Christian sort or between the Islamic brotherhoods. I guess the Christians and animists were in such a minority that they never thought about raising problems. Mali is also a country that is mostly Muslim. But I don't think there was any "militant Islam" at the time.

*Q: Hostility towards the West was not a particular factor?*

FAIRCHILD: No, this was before a lot of those problems arose, although I think I mentioned before during the 1967 war in the Middle East there were a fair number of Senegalese and Mauritians lining up at the Egyptian embassy to go and fight against the Israelis. One of my titles in that AF/W job was also economic officer for West African Affairs, even though my credentials were mighty slim for such a title. But the following year, 1970, I was asked to go with three USAID officials to inspect and report on the Ambassador's Self Help Fund operations in Africa. The Self Help Fund was a special appropriation of a few million dollars that was divided up among all the Ambassadors in countries where we didn't have bilateral aid programs. It was for small projects that would help supplement the work that communities did. I think I was supposed to be a sort of "political commissar" on this trip to make sure the final report didn't say nasty things about the Fund or its operations, since some in the State Africa Bureau suspected that USAID had no great love for this program and that they were looking for ways to end it. There was, however, no reason to fear that. These USAID people were quite interested in making sure that the program was working well and that the rules were followed, and they had no intention of killing it. Those three people were Clarke Billings, Ken Day, and Henry Rosenbaum. We went to quite a few places – official stops included Senegal, Niger, Chad, Burundi, and Swaziland. We interviewed representatives from our Embassy in Bangui while we were in Fort Lamy – now N'Djamena. We also had to spend several days making connections to these places, and did minor interviews along the way in Ivory Coast, Cameroon, and Kenya. Anyway it was a very good trip, about six weeks long as I recall. In addition to getting a lot of really good professional perspectives from the trip, including some definite ideas about which posts I might like to be assigned to in the future. I also picked up a nice case of malaria. Fortunately the strain of malaria I got was easier to cure than the strains we have now, because a couple of weeks of rest and strong doses of Aralen knocked it out. Thankfully I have never had a recurrence.

*Q: Was there a handbook of suggested self-help programs or something that the ambassadors could leaf through and say I wonder if I could use this.*

FAIRCHILD: Yes. I don't think there was at the beginning of the program, but as people came to gain experience with the program a number of ambassadors contributed to something like a brochure. There was of course a cable actually that outlined what you should along with some general guidance. It would say, for example, if people need a corrugated tin roof for their schoolhouse that is a good project. Buying a vehicle for some entity, however, whether it is a town or a village or an agricultural operation, is not a good idea because you could be expected to provide the gas or the oil later on, and we didn't want long open-ended commitments of that type.

*Q: Perhaps fuel might also have ended up being sold by the chief or some local official, yes?*

FAIRCHILD: That's right, and we obviously wanted to prevent that kind of thing from happening. But corruption isn't just limited to the Third World, as you know. One of the interesting things about being Mali Desk Officer at the time was that the military government decided on a number of areas to reform, and while not inclined to privatize any state enterprises they did look for ways to overcome some of the inconsistencies and inefficiencies of a socialist economy. One of the ways they tried to do that was to look for a way to stop losing money hand over fist with Air Mali. They were looking for some kind of wet lease operation from some place in the West, and they obviously had some inquiries going on in the United States. This was my first exposure to difficulties on the Congressional side, specifically with a particular Congressman named Bertram Podell from New York – Brooklyn I think. I actually never spoke to him, but his people were constantly calling and trying to set up appointments with the Malians for themselves and for others in Florida with some connection with the Congressman. I was trying to facilitate their and others' contacts with the Malians, but at one point I remember one of these staff people saying, "You haven't been very energetic in all of this. You are not trying to push them back in to the arms of the Soviets are you?" I replied saying, "No, I would love to see them have a wet lease with an American firm, but that American firm needs to know that Air Mali has never ever paid its bills so I am looking to protect both parties in this operation. I want to make sure the Malians get connected with a good American partner, but the American partner needs to know fully the risks involved in this operation." Their ardor for signing up with Air Mali cooled a bit after that, especially with regard to the Florida friends of the Congressman. Whatever the facts were in this case, I noted in the New York Times some years later that Congressman Podell was indicted for financial shenanigans, and he actually went to prison.

*Q: Was there a black movement, an American black African American movement that impacted on our work or was this in later years.*

FAIRCHILD: I think that occurred in later years after Alex Haley's book Roots and the television series came out. We did not have a lot of African Americans coming to seek out their roots at that time. There were some people I dealt with in Washington in those days who had participated in the 1966 Festival of Negro Arts in Dakar ("*Festival des Arts Negres*," as it was styled in French). I recall Mrs. Virginia Inness-Brown, who had been very active with the Festival, and a promoter of various projects named Rafael Szmurak. They eventually became involved in hotel building venture in Dakar that never amounted to anything for lack of sufficient financing. But there were also writers and film people who went to Dakar. In fact when I was still in Senegal Orson Welles and Ursula Andress appeared for a while as they filmed the movie "Southern Cross."

*Q: Was all this related to "Negritude," the concept that President Senghor promoted?*

FAIRCHILD: Yes, he did. Senghor certainly popularized the concept. I think it was first used by a writer from the French West Indies named Aimé Césaire, but Senghor picked up this theme and he is known to history as the person who promoted it. There is a lot of this celebration of Negritude in his poetry, and his poems both extol African beauty and the African sense of beauty as well as traditions and cultural elements that are uniquely African. Much of Senghor's poetry is very

moving, and if one has spent much time in Africa – especially Senegal – it evokes images, scenes, ideas, and memories that are very familiar.

*Q: How did you find the embassies you were dealing with? I mean one of the stories we developed in this oral histories program is some countries are better at playing the United States than others. What was your impression at this particular point in time?*

FAIRCHILD: The Senegalese were much better at it than the Malians were. Of course the Gambians as I said had no representation here. The problem with the Francophone countries in Africa in general is that a lot of their people don't speak English or don't speak it well enough to be effective in Washington. The Senegalese ambassador did speak English, and was an effective player around town. The Malians less so, and I think this general comment holds for most of the Francophone African countries. A lot of them had severe financial problems. For example, they would frequently have trouble paying their telex or their telephone bills and we occasionally had to intervene to persuade the telephone company not to cut them off, but to let them have a little more time. They were eventually good for it, and that was our point, but they just weren't very good at making prompt payments.

*Q: Did the embassy in France from your perspective act as the big brother to the Francophone embassies?*

FAIRCHILD: Yes, although sometimes less subtly than at other times. I remember always having a regular contact with the French Embassy. In a very unobtrusive way they were always interested in what was going on between us and the African embassies. They were anxious to know what was the American attitude about this, that, and the other, for example. The French had always had and I suspect still have someone in their embassy in Washington in charge of African affairs.

*Q: Well we had somebody in our embassy in Paris who was interested in African Affairs.*

FAIRCHILD: Absolutely. That in fact was a job I hoped to get for myself at one point, but fate dictated otherwise. When I was trying to get that job some years later it was both for NEA, meaning covering the Middle East, and simultaneously African affairs. They eventually split it some years after I was trying to get it. I thought I had good credentials for that in 1981, having done Iran at that point and Afghanistan, and I obviously the African connection. But the personnel panel in its alleged wisdom thought otherwise.

*Q: Well how long were you working on the African Bureau?*

FAIRCHILD: Well, I started in 1969 and finished in 1971. When I was casting about for what I wanted to do next I thought I should try something other than African affairs in order to put an extra arrow or two in my quiver. The AF/W office was right across the hall from the executive office of the NEA Bureau, and I got to know the deputy director at the time – his name was Howard Shaffer. When I was doing my recuperation from an attack of malaria, one of the books I read was Caravans by Michener, all of which is based in Afghanistan. I started reading more about Afghanistan and thought that this seemed like a very interesting place. I talked to Howard about that and he said something like "Sure, you should bid on it. You will need some language training

but we can fix that up.” Long story short, at some point in the late summer of 1971 I started Persian language training. That was the first class that was actually taught by Afghans. Before that if you were going to Afghanistan you learned Farsi from an Iranian-American teacher, rather than study what the Afghans called “Dari.” They are essentially the same language, although the word usage in Dari is generally an older, perhaps a more pure form of Persian than what they speak in Iran. I believe most well educated Iranians would agree with that, even if they regard Afghans as country bumpkin cousins. But, in any case, at this time they started having real Afghans teaching it. So I learned the Afghan accent, word usage – for example using Pashto derivatives as Afghans do in preference to either Persian or Arabic words – and that worked well once I actually got to Kabul.

*Q: And you were in Kabul, in the first place how did you find the language training and the language.*

FAIRCHILD: Difficult, but it could have been worse. It could have been Arabic, which is infinitely more difficult. I believe the hardest thing about Persian is not so much the syntax, which is not bad, or a lot of the words, or even the alphabet. Learning the alphabet and learning to read from right to left is relatively easy, a skill that take days rather than months or years to master. But I found that the use of Arabic derivatives complicated things for me. For example, in Persian and Dari, the normal way to form a plural of a singular known is to add a suffix to the word – as we add an “s” in English. But where Arabic words are used, for example the word “*taraf*” meaning side, the double plural – meaning two sides is “*tarafeyn*,” and for three or more sides it is “*atraf*” – an internal change in the singular form. And in such cases both in Dari and Farsi the Arabic forms are used. Farsi and Dari are much more difficult than French, and I thought the French program at FSI was superb. It seemed to work well for me in any case. We had what FSI called then a “scientific linguist” attached to the language courses who checked with our class periodically. In our case he was a man of White Russian origin, whose name was Sergei Obolensky. He spoke flawless Farsi, Russian of course, and excellent French. They put you in right from day one learning the Persian alphabet, and then you would do exercises using real or nonsense words that were designed to help you get the pronunciation down correctly. That lasted a couple of weeks. Then you jumped right into real sentences in Farsi – reading and writing.

*Q: How was there a pecking order that if you were learning Persian as opposed to Dari, that you were higher up the ladder or not?*

FAIRCHILD: Well, I really wasn’t aware of anything like that, and I don’t think that existed – at least not at FSI. I do know, however, that traditionally the Afghans often had something of an inferiority complex with regard to the Iranians, which the Iranians gleefully reciprocated by having a superiority complex with regard to the Afghans. But as I noted earlier, thoughtful Iranians and those who knew a little of the history of their own language would say that Afghan Persian was actually a much purer form of Persian. They would use a lot of words which were Persian in origin as opposed to Arabic or English or French derivatives. I remember an amusing example of the cultural attitude issue between Afghans and Iranians. One day we were in class and the Persian teacher walked by. Fereidoun Khojanouri was his name. I guess he heard someone in our class say something like this, “necktie-ye toon bisyar fashoneest.” Which means your necktie is very fashionable or very nice. He frowned and said “Oh, you Afghans. You have ruined the language.



You have got all these English derivatives. Necktie and Fashoni.” A couple of days later I got out of the elevator and there was Mr. Khojanouri. I was wearing a very new and very attractive tie at the time. He looked at me and saw it and said, “Bah bah bah, caravat-e-toon kheilee chic-eh.” I replied, “Just a minute. How come it is bad form for the Afghans to say Necktie and Fashoni but it’s fine for you to say Caravat and Chic?” He harrumphed, and said something like “Oh it is not the same thing at all, you wouldn’t understand.” Well, I think I understood pretty well.

*Q: Well as one of the things as always happens when you take a language, you learn quite a bit about the culture too. I mean how was Afghanistan? Was it considered sort of the back of the beyond or what at that time?*

FAIRCHILD: This was of course before the days of the coups and revolutions in Afghanistan, and before the kind of problems developed that we face now. There was something of a Great Game competition between the U.S. and the Soviets, not exactly the same thing as the Russian-English Great Game of the 19<sup>th</sup> century but we were clearly trying to provide Cold War competition for the Soviets. They had a huge embassy, and they had done similar things to help develop the infrastructure there as we had done and were doing. Those of us who were taking a more long-term view probably thought that there was room for constructive competition in Afghanistan. We were both trying to help them in a certain ways, and the Afghans should be able to do a balancing act to their own advantage. But I think one of the problems, and we really didn’t have a good fix on this as I think back, was that among the various Soviet aid projects there was military and technical assistance. They had advisors to the Afghan military, many of whom I suspect were from Central Asia and who were native speakers of Persian – like the Tajiks – or had studied Pashto before coming there. So, given the cantonment system of Afghan military bases, meaning that the Afghan military were on bases far away from towns and somewhat isolated and self-sufficient, we didn’t really have a good fix on what these military advisors were doing. What they were up to became obvious in the summer of 1973 when there was a coup d’état led by leftist Pashtun military officers against the king’s government while the king was out of the country. They succeeded, and started doing things that were more compatible with Soviet interests in the country than ours. The person who became head of the government following that coup in 1973 was Sardar Daoud Khan, who was the King’s cousin and who had been prime minister in the 1950’s. I am not sure from what I have read that he was with the conspirators from the beginning, but they clearly invited him to join them and he chose to or accepted to become the head of the government. He was a very tough guy. I had left the country by the time of his coup; in fact I left the country three days before his coup was staged in 1973. Although I remember subsequently when we were in Tehran we decided to take R&R not to Europe but to go back to Afghanistan for *auld lang syne* and to see old friends. That was 1978. Again, just after we left Kabul and went back to Tehran there was the coup of 1978 which was the first of a couple of communist coups. That first coup was carried out by people who followed Nur Mohammad Taraki, who had once been a translator for the U.S. embassy. Not too long after that in 1979, there was a nastier coup by another one of the communist factions led by Hafizullah Amin that overthrew the Taraki government. It was that Hafizullah Amin government that got so out of hand and committed so many outrages that even the Soviets decided they had to step in and set things right. They did that in late 1979.

*Q: Well you were in Afghanistan from when to when?*

FAIRCHILD: Well it would have been 1972 and 1973.

*Q: What was the situation in Afghanistan when you went there?*

FAIRCHILD: It is a very primitive country, a very poor country. Like many countries in the Third World, they have lots of mineral resources that will cost a fortune to develop and export because the infrastructure, roads and so forth, are just not there to do it. It is also a very tribal society. The Pashtuns were the dominant ethnic group, accounting for I would guess about 45% of the population. At the time all of the other ethnic groups fell into line behind them in the pecking order. The next group numerically were the Tajiks, who are native speakers of Persian. The Pashtuns have their own language, and when you hear it spoken it sounds like a combination of Persian and Urdu. I think it is probably a little more complicated grammatically than Persian, for example I understand that nouns are declined in Pashto as they are in Latin and Russian, although I do not know Pashto at all. Then there are smaller ethnic groups, for example Uzbeks and Kazakhs and Nuristanis, and at the bottom of the totem pole are the Hazaras. The Hazaras have a number of strikes against them: they are visibly different with their Mongol features, and they are regarded as the descendants of the Mongol hordes of the past. They are also Shiite as opposed to Sunni Muslims, and usually hold the most menial jobs in the cities of Afghanistan. So, this was the ethnic background at the time I was there.

The central government has always been relatively weak in Afghanistan. The major Pashtun tribes for over 200 years had a *modus vivendi* with each other whereby it was agreed that the Mohammedzai clan of Durrani Pashtuns would furnish the kings, and that they in turn would collect taxes and spread the wealth around. They also paid subsidies to the tribal leaders in the mountainous area between Afghanistan and Pakistan to maintain order in their own areas, at least that was the polite fiction of the arrangement. In effect, however, it was the classical pattern of lowlanders paying off mountaineers to stay there and not to come down from the hills and raid the people who live in the lowlands. The king had launched something of a democratic experiment, and had established a parliament shortly before I arrived there. Following parliamentary affairs was one of my principal duties, and I got to know a number of parliamentarians fairly well. They included Babrak Karmal, who was a communist but was sometimes known as the “royal communist” because he apparently had good relations with the royal family. He eventually became chief of state after the Soviet invasion, and was in fact brought back to Kabul in the baggage train of the Soviet army when they invaded in 1979. After the Hafizullah Amin coup he had been exiled by being named the ambassador of the Amin government to Czechoslovakia.

Following the Parliament occasionally had its light moments. I recall that when I first went to the parliament it was a rainy day, and I was wearing this brand new blue raincoat that I had bought at the Foreign Affairs Recreation Association store in the Department. It was a London Fog, and it was their first departure from the standard beige raincoat. When I approached parliament I had my diplomatic ID ready to show, but when I got to the front door the two guards there suddenly snapped to attention and opened the door, saluting me smartly. I thought to myself that this is the way things should be, and obviously someone had told them to expect a visitor from the U.S. Embassy. So, I went in and met the secretary of the parliament and some others. The second time I went about a week later, I had that raincoat with me and the soldiers saluted smartly, and I saluted back and went in. The third time I went it was a bright sunny day and so I didn't wear the raincoat.

There were different guards and they wanted to see my ID and they called up to the secretary's office to make sure that it was OK to let me in. I was stunned at this sudden lack of the respect shown me earlier. After entering the chamber, I was introduced by one of the parliamentarians I knew to the head of the secret police who was visiting the parliament that day. I immediately noticed that over his arm was a blue raincoat that looked exactly like mine. So, probably those poor guards figured that, even though I didn't look like an Afghan, I clearly was associated with the intelligence service since I wore the telltale blue raincoat. That is why they were so deferential to me when I first showed up.

*Q: What was your job in Kabul?*

FAIRCHILD: I was number two in the political section. My boss was William Helseth, who had previously served in Turkey and Iran. I was supposed to cover mostly internal affairs, with a focus on the parliament. We had two local employees who translated the Pashto and Dari press clips for us, and we would do follow up on items of interest. It was the classical political officer job. Mr. Helseth took care of the external side of things, although he paid attention to the domestic side too. For some reason I was also made protocol officer, which meant I got to attend a number of events with U.S. Ambassador Robert Gerhard Neumann. He was ambassador in Kabul for about seven or eight years. Maybe I should say a few words about him because he was a very impressive man.

*Q: This is the father of...*

FAIRCHILD: ...of Ronald Neumann, yes. Who also followed his father as U.S. Ambassador in Afghanistan many years later, one of those rare father-son acts that you don't see very often in American diplomatic history. Ambassador Neumann was an academic, from Southern California, or at least that is where he was at the time. I believe he was active in something like "Republican academics for Johnson" in the 1964 election, no doubt because he like many Republicans had no stomach for Barry Goldwater. Later Neumann was appointed U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan by President Johnson, was confirmed in that job by the Nixon White House – presumably because he had kept his Republican credentials well burnished. Ambassador Neumann was originally from Austria, and had been raised as a Roman Catholic. His parents were originally Jewish, and later converted to Catholicism at some point before he was born. When the Nazis, the Germans, took over Austria after Anschluss in 1938, even though Robert Neumann was active in the youth wing of the Center Party which was the Catholic party, the Germans said the Nazi equivalent of "Catholic-Shmatholic, your parents were originally Jewish. That means you are going to be arrested." And he was arrested and sent to a concentration camp. When I first heard him talk about this it was one of those compelling moments you always remember. It was at a staff meeting, and one of the USAID people was talking about the famine situation in the central highlands of Afghanistan. He said something like, "Oh Mr. Ambassador, it is a terrible situation. Things just can't get any worse." At that point Ambassador Neumann said, and I won't try to imitate his Austrian accent although he did have a noticeable one, "You know you should never say that things can't get worse. When the Nazis came into Austria I was arrested and they sent me to Dachau. While there I said to myself this is terrible; things just can't get any worse. But then they transferred me to Buchenwald, and sure enough – things got worse." Well, there is simply no rejoinder to a comment like that. He didn't over use this story, although I did hear him use it on two or three other occasions. It never failed to cause people to sit up and take notice.

*Q: How would you say, what was your impression of the Afghan government?*

FAIRCHILD: It struck me, although I might not have articulated it exactly this way at the time, as being typical of a lot of Third World governments. In other words, you have a number of real stars at the top, people who are well educated and articulate and smart. But they are sort of boxed in by the cultural and political imperatives of the place where they live. And below that top level, the bottom falls out and you don't have good secondary or tertiary bureaucrats or people in government who can really make a place run and run well, efficiently, or at least in a decent sort of way. There was a corruption problem, but it wasn't unmanageable. It wasn't the sort of thing that seems to be happening now in Afghanistan under the Karzai government. There is a difference in Persian between the word for bribe, which is "*reshveh*," and the word that I would translate as a tip that is more or less expected. That is "*baksheesh*." *Baksheesh* has to be a relatively small amount, and I don't think you can actually call that corruption. People who have very low salaries or none at all make up the difference through *baksheesh*. I recall from my study of history an account of a petition sent by the notables of a province of Turkey to the Sultan asking him to extend the tenure of the appointed governor there. You may know that for many centuries the Ottoman bureaucrats received no salary, but were allowed to keep fees and "*baksheesh*." In the petition, after singing the praises of the governor's many talents and virtues, the notables offered the highest compliment of all: "He never took more than was expected!"

*Q: What were our main concerns there?*

FAIRCHILD: We were trying to assist the Afghans through a variety of aid projects – infrastructure and agricultural projects. We were trying to help develop agriculture in the Helmand Valley in southern Afghanistan, and we had earlier helped build a dam in the that region. I think the ultimate goal was to help them become self sufficient in agriculture so they wouldn't be prey to the problems of countries who have to import large amounts of food. Periodically, because of bad weather and bad crops, there would be famine here or there throughout the country. We were also very much concerned about the drug problem. Afghanistan even then was a great source of opium. Farmers in poor and remote sections of the country, like Badakhshan in the northeast, simply couldn't make enough to get by on raising standard agricultural products. They could harvest opium and carry it out on a knapsack on their back, maybe even get two crops a year, and make enough money to live reasonably well and support their families. I remember one of the early things I did for the political section was to go visit our USAID projects in the south, and while there I noticed around the periphery of these beautiful fields of agricultural products there were lots of marijuana plants growing. They were quite abundant and they looked very healthy. So the drug trade was a major problem. We had representatives in the Embassy from the Drug Enforcement Agency; there were two agents who assisted Afghan authorities in breaking up drug rings. Once time before I left they discovered a heroin laboratory in Afghanistan, and hired some people to help blow it up.

*Q: Was the embassy having to deal with a large number of American youth who were coming to Afghanistan to enjoy the pleasures of marijuana and opium and whatever?*

FAIRCHILD: Oh, absolutely. We had lots. The polite term in those days for such young people was “world traveler.” Some people would say émigré hippies, or something less complimentary. Yes, there were lots of world travelers, and there were a couple of hotels which were known as opium dens or at least places where you could stay relatively cheaply and find an easy source of hashish or marijuana. Occasionally these people got into real trouble, and some overdosed and died. But I would say at any given time there were probably 40 to 50 folks like that in town.

*Q: But that was a consular matter. Did you get involved in any of that?*

FAIRCHILD: No, not really I was not involved in consular matters. Although I do remember once we had some notices out in the Embassy about what to do if certain things happened to certain citizens. One of the people that American justice was looking for in those days was Timothy Leary.

*Q: Former Harvard professor who was big on LSD and all that?*

FAIRCHILD: That’s right. He was involved with an outfit that the DEA was anxious to shut down at one point. I remember one afternoon getting a call, I was the duty officer at the time, from the airport authorities saying there was an American citizen there whose papers were not in order. I said, “Can you tell me anything more? What is the person’s name?” They said, “His name is Dr. Timothy Leary.” I said, “Oh right. Someone will be out there in just a few minutes.” I then called the DEA office, and shortly their agents went out to the airport. Leary was later put on a plane with a DEA agent escort, and flown all the way back to the United States where he was arrested and put on trial.

*Q: Was there much political movement there? One hears about, I can’t recite the name like JURGA, these big conferences where people get together. What was sort of the political life like?*

FAIRCHILD: I think political activity of the legal kind was mainly focused, to the extent that it was formalized, in the parliament. The term you are looking for is Loya Jirga, which is Pashto for “great council.” That was traditionally a Pashtun tribal gathering that would sort out thorny problems, but it was based on the consensus model. I think the parliament tended to act that way too, even though you had a number of fairly sharp divisions along the different political characters. Most of the parliamentarians who were friendly to the king or the monarchy and the status quo ran as individuals, not as members of a monarchist party as such. The people who were organized into formal parties were actually on the leftist side. There were about two or three main groups, and they had names like “Parcham” (the banner), “Khalq” (the masses), and Sholeh-ye-Jaweed” (the eternal flame). They ultimately came to power and indulged in pretty nasty internecine strife.

I remember one trip up country that I made with G. Whitney Azoy, who was with USIA, and with Mark Platt, from the Economic Section and a good friend of mine who, alas, died in the early 1990’s. We went with an Afghan employee of the cultural center, Sher Khan, on a trip to Paktia Province and Khost Province, the heart of Pashtunistan. This was a time of a lot of leftist political activity, both in Kabul and in the provinces. We were visiting the governor of Khost, and he mentioned the fact that some of these left wing students had broken into a mosque in the area and desecrated the place, defiling the Koran with human excrement and other unpleasant things. Word

of that event got out to the tribal people in the hills, mostly Waziris as I recall, who came riding into Khost a couple hundred strong to call on the Governor. They requested, or rather demanded, that when he caught the culprits they should be turned over to the tribal leaders rather than send them to Kabul for trial. The tribal leaders asserted that they would then do what had to be done. As soon as I heard that I thought of the Kipling story “The Mercy of the King,” in which the king took three days to kill someone he had a run in with and showed his “mercy” by having the poor wretch put out of his misery. So I asked the governor what happened, and he replied, “We caught the culprits, and...well, justice was served. Would you like some more tea?” That was the end of that conversation. He did say in passing though maybe several hundred tribesmen, all armed to the teeth as most males above puberty are in that part of the world, had arrived riding horses. He had thought about heading them off with tanks. Although he had a few tanks at his disposal, he said “I though better of that. If I send out the tanks and they discover all they have to do is ride around them, the threat of using the tanks just wouldn’t work anymore.”

*Q: What about some of the neighbors? Were we watching, today if course it is Pakistan, but Pakistan and Iran as well as the former Soviet Union? What was happening on that front?*

FAIRCHILD: Troubles with Pakistan continued at that time. I think there have been troubles with Pakistan since Pakistan achieved independence after partition in 1948. I think the main reason, at least at the time, was that the authorities in Pakistan were deathly afraid that their own Pashtuns on their side of the border would be tempted away from the Pakistani nation by the Afghans to create something called Pashtunistan. Or at least to do things that were against the central government in Pakistan. I think Pakistan is a small empire rather than a nation, and that the Punjabis don’t really like the Sindhis, or like the Pashtuns or the others that much. And vice versa of course. It is hard to keep all of that together. So that was the concern about Pakistan, and the Afghan government – both under the king and later under the Communists – made quite a bit of fuss on that score. They referred to the Pashtun areas on the Pakistani side of the border as “condemned Pashtunistan.” There may have been some troubles directly south of the border, in the Baloochi sections of Pakistan, but I didn’t recall any of those. With Iran the main issue was water rights in the south, the Helmand River specifically. The Afghans thought that the Iranians were stealing their water basically, and the Iranians would say “we have as much right to the water in this river as you do.” There were those frictions over water, but I don’t think there were any major frictions beyond that, however. The Iranians were hoping to assist without putting too much money into their poor neighboring country, seeking primarily to achieve stability in Afghanistan. They probably had the attitude that no news is good news when it comes to Afghanistan. They had a fairly good sized embassy in Kabul, but not of an inappropriately large size.

*Q: What about the Soviets?*

FAIRCHILD: The Soviets had a fairly big embassy. We, I mean those of us in the American Embassy, had only infrequent contacts with them. When we met with them though it was usually as a protocol required event. When you first arrived at post you would call on your counterpart in other embassies, including the Soviet Embassy, and they in turn would call on you. You would exchange pleasantries and talk a little bit about the country and ask the other’s views on certain things, but it wasn’t a close relationship by any means. This was after all the height of the Cold War. We saw them as our global adversary, and I am sure they saw us the same way.

*Q: Were you able to get around the country fairly well?*

FAIRCHILD: Yes and no. Technically we had the four-wheeled drive vehicles that could carry one all over the countryside no matter how rough the terrain. But as an embassy officer if you were planning to make a trip you had to inform the Foreign Ministry through a diplomatic note outlining what you wanted to do, where you planned to go, and what and whom you planned to see. For example, for this trip that I mentioned earlier that I took with Whitney Azoy, Mark Platt, and Sher Khan – who was the local employee of USIA, we sent a diplomatic note, and we noted that we were planning to spend some time with some friends at the German aid mission in Khost province. In Paktia province we were going to stay with Sher Khan's family in the village of Yusuf Khel. We actually got to Khost a bit ahead of schedule, but just as we were arriving at the compound of our German friends, who had a big forestry project there, the Governor of Khost Province sent word to us that we would be his guests in the government guesthouse. The guesthouse was in fact a run down hotel that didn't even have running water. We were sorry to have missed the companionship, good food, and good beer of our German friends, but protocol demanded that we make do with the severely Spartan accommodations we had in the government guesthouse.

*Q: Did you have much contact with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and what was your impression?*

FAIRCHILD: Yes, usually Bill Helseth took that task on himself, but I had a number of calls I had to make either in his absence or on subjects that I was responsible for. I think what I said earlier about talent at the top and nothing much down below was not quite the case with the Foreign Ministry, because they had a lot of very talented people who were not at the ministerial level or deputy level. The department heads all seemed to be quite knowledgeable. They all spoke either excellent English or French, and they were almost all educated in England or France. I think there was one person who had gone to school in the United States. I forget who was Foreign Minister when I arrived, but shortly after I arrived Musa Shafiq was named Foreign Minister. He was very impressive, urbane, witty, well read. I remember once we had a visit from Governor John Connally, who although a Republican from Texas was then Secretary of the Treasury. The mention of Musa Shafiq made me think of this. It was a fairly quick visit, and one without much advance notice. We did try to get a few high-level appointments, but it didn't work out. I remember that the Department's Secretariat staff accompanying Connally was headed by Nick Veliotis. At one point Nick was asking why can't the Foreign Minister receive Governor Connally. It occurred to me, and I had bad taste to say so, that his inability to receive Connally might have something to do with the fact that when Musa Shafiq visited Washington a couple of months earlier the Afghans couldn't get an appointment for him with either the Secretary of State or anybody else of note in Washington. Maybe he was getting his own back.

*Q: Was religion a big issue while you were there?*

FAIRCHILD: Yes, of course, and I think there still is a lot of religious intolerance in Afghanistan, certainly for religions that are non-Muslim, but even within that larger Muslim category if you are a Shiite Muslim you are considered a heretic in most of Afghanistan. It is further complicated also by some of the ethnic elements, and there are questions of tribal groups or clans who heartily

dislike their neighbors on the other side of the mountain despite the fact that they are also Pashtuns and Sunni Muslims. They have these blood feuds or vendettas that can date back for a couple of hundred years in some cases. It's somewhat reminiscent of the Hatfields and McCoys in the United States. I also remember that there were laws governing the practice of other religions, for example while there could be a Christian church it was illegal to have a cross on top. Also illegal was having a sign out front identifying the building as a church. There was, of course, nothing like the sectarian or ethnic violence that followed the Russian withdrawal during the time I was in Afghanistan.

*Q: Were you married at the time?*

FAIRCHILD: Yes, although we ultimately divorced. I later married the former wife of another officer at the Embassy at that time. She is Iranian by birth, and is my wife today. Her maiden name was Parvin Aslanzadeh Jehangiri, and we were married in 1975 in Arlington, Virginia. She had two children from her first marriage, whereas I had none. I adopted her children shortly after our marriage. I am happy to say they were good children, even though we all experienced growing pains together as in any family. They have both grown into adulthood, and are loving parents of their own children. Our daughter graduated from William and Mary, after short false starts at the University of Colorado and George Washington; our son started out at George Mason, but soon transferred to the Pratt Institute in New York where he received a degree in Fine Arts.

*Q: Well I was wondering if you got any feel for the role of women in Afghanistan during this tour?*

FAIRCHILD: Absolutely. I think there was then and remains to this day a strong strain of misogyny in Afghan society, specifically as part of Pashtun tribal mores. Among the Afghan elite of the time, the royal family as well as business elites, you didn't have that impression at all. Those women didn't wear burqas – or chadors as they call them in that part of the world. Certainly among the vast majority of Afghans women played a distinctly secondary role. They were often kept out of sight. Although education was expanding at the time, I don't think education for girls was a priority of the government by any means. On the trip to Paktia and Khost Provinces that I mentioned earlier, we visited our Afghan friend's home and were there for two days and two nights. We never saw a woman during the whole time. We didn't see his mother, nor see his sisters. We didn't even see female servants, although they had them. It was very much a man's world there in the heart of Afghan Pashtunistan.

*Q: Was there much of an Afghan cadre in the Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs at that time, or was it sort of a side show that people went to and then went elsewhere.*

FAIRCHILD: Maybe not quite a side show. Nobody wants to think he is part of a side show, but it was not like the Arabist cadre by any means. My impression was that we were regarded as a second string team, at least as far as NEA was concerned. There were people who had done Afghanistan before. My colleague and friend Mike Hornblow had been in Afghanistan when I was in Senegal. I think the pattern was, and this is linguistically driven, that those who served in Afghanistan usually at some point later on went to Iran – and vice versa perhaps. Of course Tajikistan was not an independent country at the time, so nobody went there.



*Q: What about what was your impression during the time you were there about the royal family?*

FAIRCHILD: Those of us in the Embassy who were not senior officers, actually senior officers as well, got to know members of the extended royal family. Not the king himself or the queen or the more powerful nobles, but certainly the younger royal children or cousins. They were part of society, and we knew them. The king was educated in France, and spoke fluent French. Ambassador Neumann, for example, always conversed in French with the king, not in English. I recall seeing a photo in the Ambassador's office of Vernon Walters who was accompanying President Eisenhower back in the 1950's as his interpreter. The language that they used was French for the meeting President Eisenhower had with the king. My impression was that the royal family was fairly sure of its position, and perhaps aloof from most people except when necessary to talk to Pashtun tribal leaders in an effort to impose the will of the king on them, to the extent they could impose the will of the king.

*Q: Were we concerned about communist influence particularly coming in?*

FAIRCHILD: Yes, I know we were. I remember doing an airgram in May, 1973, that reviewed the leftist political scene in Afghanistan. An airgram, for those who don't recognize the term, was a long document that was sent in through the diplomatic pouch. With improvements in communications airgrams were replaced by telegrams, although we used telegrams back in the early 1970s for communicating more time-sensitive and shorter messages. Some of the Afghan leftist parties were more organized than others. I don't think at the time, however, that we thought it very likely they would take power. That was probably because we thought that the existing social structure was strong enough to resist a leftist takeover, certainly in the countryside. What we did not have a good handle on was the military side of things, as I noted earlier. So, when the coup came it was actually run by the Pashtun army officers who had a leftist political bent.

*Q: Did we have much of an exchange program or student program or what have you promising Afghans to come to the United States to get a look at us and maybe to get educated by us?*

FAIRCHILD: Yes, there was an exchange program. I don't know if we called it the international visitor program at the time, but I think that is probably what it was. I wouldn't say it was a huge program, but there were exchanges of potential leaders that came to the U.S. We had an American cultural center with a library, and we had some cultural presentations there. But my impression was that it was not an extremely well funded effort. This contrasted with the program next door in Iran, which was very active, very well funded, and I think relatively successful.

*Q: Were wealthy Afghan families sending their kids to school out of the country?*

FAIRCHILD: I think some did that in those days, witness the Foreign Ministry officials I mentioned earlier. But wealthy Afghans were still not that wealthy and relatively few could afford foreign educations. I don't know if you have seen the film, "The Kite Runner," but it is a story that took place in Afghanistan by an Afghan writer who is a doctor and whose family is in the United States. He came from what I would call a wealthy Afghan family. But wealthy in Afghan terms usually meant that they were considerably better off than the vast majority of people in

Afghanistan, but they didn't have the kind of resources that would allow them to have a Mercedes with a driver or to have their kids in school in the States or England or France.

*Q: Did you have visits. I am thinking official visits while you were there?*

FAIRCHILD: No, I don't think we had that many. I would have been involved in them I think because it was only a two person political section where everyone has to carry some of the load for official visits. No, I don't think there were many official visits at all. I remember the John Connally visit because it had us tied in knots for several days. There were of course visits from the NEA desk officer for Afghanistan as well as other State Department officials.

*Q: Well you left there when?*

FAIRCHILD: I left there in the summer of 1973, just days before the coup. I was assigned to Washington to a bureau that was considered something of a side show, to use your earlier term, but it was one that interested me quite a bit – the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. My assignment there was an appropriate one; it was in the office of the Bureau that dealt with African affairs, and I had responsibility for Francophone West Africa programs and exchanges. I tried to meet personally with every international visitor who arrived. Bill Edmondson was head of the office at the time, and most of the staff were budding Africa hands. So, we knew our turf pretty well. I found it quite interesting and fun, but after about a year I was told by Bill Edmondson that the special assistant to the assistant secretary was about to be reassigned and suggested I interview for the job. The assistant secretary was John Richardson, who was one of my very best bosses and very favorite people. He was a Nixon appointee, probably the best Nixon appointee ever – at least by my lights. Anyway, I was tapped for that job after working about a year on African programs, and served as special assistant for another year. These special assistant jobs at the time, it may still be that way, are considered as “excepted assignments.” In other words you are not given the usual two-year assignment but rather a renewable one-year assignment. That allows both you and the principal to see how you get along and if you meet each other's expectations. I was delighted to work for John, who had been a paratrooper in World War II, came from a very old established and wealthy New England family, worked on Wall Street for a while, and was head of Radio Free Europe at one point. He was just a superb boss. He was also very well connected with the better people in the Nixon administration. For example, Leonard Garment was a close friend of his and would come by frequently to have an afternoon chat.

*Q: He was later head of USIA.*

FAIRCHILD: No, John was never head of USIA In those days, because of the Fulbright Hays Act, our educational and cultural programs were managed in a somewhat schizophrenic manner. USIA implemented the programs in the field, but the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs in the State Department managed it from Washington. Some years later John did become the head of the United States Institute of Peace.

*Q: There was something about Fulbright didn't trust or didn't want to give USIA too much power. As a theme that goes way back.*

FAIRCHILD: I think that is it. Shortly after I left CU to go to Iran, they had this large study group called the Murphy Commission, which recommended a number of changes in how the U.S. Government was structured, and among other things recommended that all of the CU Bureau operations be folded into USIA so that it would have the total marriage of both the management and the implementation sides of things. That occurred, I believe, in 1976.

*Q: Back a bit before you move to your job as special assistant, where were the students of Francophone Africa going to school or what were they doing in the United States?*

FAIRCHILD: I don't think we had that many Francophone students in the United States. There were some, obviously, but I think at that time Francophone African elites were beginning to discover McGill University and Laval University in Canada, which they found a slightly more hospitable environment. In Canada you could still have a Francophone world and get a degree that would work anywhere in the French system, either in France or in Africa, and in the "Anglo-Saxon world." We had some graduate students scattered around the States, and we had Fulbright professors and graduate students at a number of African universities. I remember when I was actually in Senegal one Fulbrighter was there for a year, Professor Franz Gross, who was originally from Germany or perhaps Austria. In any case, he spoke English with a very heavy German accent. I remember meeting some of his students later after he left the country. Gross also taught English, and it was somewhat disconcerting to speak with his former Senegalese students and hear them speak English with a decidedly German accent.

*Q: Well then as special assistant, what were you doing?*

FAIRCHILD: Well, some of it may seem fairly mechanical, but the ultimate goal of most special assistant duties is to maximize the efficiency of the assistant secretary's time. For example, one reviews memoranda that come in to see if they make the point that they are supposed to and provide the assistant secretary with the information he needs. If you think they have overlooked something, you bounce it back and tell them to cover these points. One has to do that judiciously because you were dealing with some office directors who may be very close to the assistant secretary. So I was very circumspect about that, but I also started writing some speeches for him, drafted letters for him, helped him set up meetings for hospitality situations, and went to escort his more important visitors to his office.

Basically the special assistant was the go-to factotum for just about everything that involved the assistant secretary. I recall once helping the Philadelphia Orchestra get in touch with the right people in the building so they could sponsor a reception on the eighth floor prior to going off to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. I remember once John asked me to call and meet at the door Isaac Stern, a violinist whose work I admired greatly, who was coming by to visit him. The spoiled son of the late and unlamented Romanian dictator Nicolai Ceausescu was another visitor I escorted to John's office. On another occasion Senator William Fulbright was in the building and was having lunch with the Secretary, following which he was going to come down and spend some time talking with John Richardson. So John asked me to go up to the Secretary's office to be there to escort the Senator down to his sixth floor office. As I was walking into the inner area of the Secretary's office, both Senator Fulbright and Secretary Kissinger emerged from the office. And as I was walking up to them, Kissinger said something like, "So, Senator what are you going to do

now. Do you have another appointment.” Fulbright said, “Yes, I am supposed to go see John Richardson, and I suspect this handsome young man who is approaching us is going to show me where I can go to meet him.” So Kissinger whirled around and said to me, “Is he correct?” I replied, “Mr. Secretary, I have always admired the Senator’s perspicacity, and my admiration is once again fully justified.” Kissinger said, “No, no, no, that is the kind of line I am supposed to use. Clever comments like that are reserved for me.” Of course we all had a big laugh, and I then took Senator Fulbright down to meet with John. As I did so, I told the Senator how he helped me get started on my career by answering that letter I sent while still in high school and advising me that I need not go to Princeton or Harvard or Yale as an undergraduate, but for graduate school – as I was thinking about the foreign service – I should consider a university of that level.

*Q: I have always felt that our exchange program in its various forms, both students and lecturers and all, was one of the most powerful arrows in our foreign affairs quiver, which never got the credit it deserved, and it has been dealt a blow with the demise of USIA. How did you feel about it observing it?*

FAIRCHILD: I felt exactly the same. Part of the problem is that the metrics you might use to judge the success of a program like cultural and educational exchanges are such that you need to have a multi-year perspective – or maybe even a generational one. I honestly think for example that one of the things that contributed to the receptivity of elites in Soviet society in the time of Gorbachev to make the kinds of changes that occurred was the exposure of that generation to other societies including our own, or maybe especially our own. With other countries and other cultures I think you can say the same thing. The problem is that in a world of one or two-year authorizations or appropriations from the Congress people who hold the purse strings want to see glowing success stories in a very short time frame. I am not sure these programs can do it unless you have enough confidence in your own society and your ability to show our good things to other people. So, one has to make not just an act of faith but operate programs like the educational and cultural ones because we have a solid confidence in our own abilities and achievements.

*Q: Well our society is a very magnetic one. People get into this country because we are basically a welcoming society. It doesn’t always work, but in the great majority of the case people are impressed by what you can do.*

FAIRCHILD: There are some negative stories of cross-cultural exposure, of course. People like Kwame Nkrumah came here and had a bad experience. The Egyptian Sayyid Qutb had a bad experience, as apparently did Ho Chi Minh. So to know us is not necessarily to love us. But I think that in the end even if it is just “to know us is to know us” then that is worthwhile. That is worthwhile whether we’re talking about friends or enemies, or those in between. If you know us well, even if you don’t have our interests at heart, you are not going to make bad assumptions and bad decisions based on a lack of knowledge about how Americans are likely to react, what they are going to do or not do in response to any given situation.

*Q: Well then in 1974 or so you left.*

FAIRCHILD: This would have been 1975. This next assignment was both fortuitous and fortunate. My so-called career counselor called me up and said, “Look here, the Commerce Department has

just persuaded State to create a position in Tehran for what they are calling a “market research officer,” which would be a detail to the U.S. Trade Center.” They wanted someone in three months, but they wanted someone who spoke Farsi. I checked with my wife and she was delighted with the prospect of “going home” to Iran. So I interviewed for the job, and I guess I had the advantage of being one of only a couple of people who were interested. And essentially the Commerce people said, “We can train you to be a market research whiz kid in three months even though nobody can learn Farsi in three months. Let’s do it.” I did a three-month stint at Commerce in their Market Research Division, and then we went to Iran in December of 1975.

*Q: Well in the first place let’s talk about market research. What does that mean?*

FAIRCHILD: The U.S. trade centers around the world sponsor shows, organized by sector or specific products, in order to promote the export of American goods and services. If you have a developed economy like those in Western Europe the task is fairly easy. You don’t have to do a lot of research on your own since it is readily available through the private sector, or sometimes through World Bank or IMF sources. You normally need good statistics for market research, on the basis of which you can decide whether or not there is a good market for U.S. goods and services. There are readily available and reliable statistics on German imports and exports, for example, so finding out what a given economic sector is all about not very difficult. In a place like Iran that was not the case. What they needed, at least in my mind, was a good political or economic officer who could apply traditional Foreign Service skills to going around meeting with people in any given sector and getting a rough but informed view of what the demand for certain products or services might be. This is especially so in a country where statistics are at best unreliable, and at worst are cooked in some way to get around tariffs – or import duties. The import statistics in Iran, for example, showed more agricultural equipment imports than could possibly be used by the country, so they were actually importing something else. Automobiles, or mink coats, or something else that would have had a much higher import duty than agricultural equipment come to mind. So if you do this kind of research then the people in the Commerce Department trade promotion offices could decide whether it would be worthwhile to put on a show in this area and recruit companies to exhibit at a trade center.

*Q: You mentioned your new wife. What was her background?*

FAIRCHILD: She is from Iran, as I mentioned earlier. Her father, Baba Khan Jehangiri, was the head of the Iranian national railroad during World War II and just after the war. He was one of the first Iranians who came to the United States to study in the early 1930’s; he studied civil engineering at the University of Michigan. Even though he came from a relatively wealthy family, he had an Iranian government scholarship. His stipend was \$100 a month, to which the family added another \$100 per month, which in 1931 would have made him the richest kid on campus I would think. But he died in the late 1960s, well before I met Parvin. One of his pet peeves in life was the habit of some Iranians to refer to themselves as “engineer” – *mohandes* in Farsi – only on the basis of having studied engineering but without having obtained a degree. Later on, when we were in Tehran, even the guy who operated the Xerox machine at the corner store referred to himself as *mohandes*! I should add that he was also one of those people who fall crazy madly in love with the United States. He thought the United States was the greatest country in the world, so when he went back to Iran he kept that in his mind. He decided that his children should be

educated in the United States, and to that end Parvin and her brother Parviz were sent to the United States to do their university studies.

Let me give you an example of the attitude of Parvin's father toward the United States. When her brother arrived to go to school in the U.S., Parvin – who had preceded him here – gave him a bicycle as a “welcome to the States” gift. Within a few days someone stole the bicycle, so Parvin wrote to her father saying something like “look what your beloved Americans did to your poor son.” When her father wrote back, he said something like “I'm sure if you investigate this carefully you'll find that the thief was another Iranian student, not an American. You see Americans just don't do things like that.”

*Q: Where did they go?*

FAIRCHILD: Parviz went to the University of California at Chico. I think he first studied agricultural subjects, with the idea was he would then go back and help manage the family lands. My wife began her studies at the University of Nebraska in Omaha, principally because she had been invited to stay with the family of a former Santa Fe Railroad official who as a U.S. Army officer had worked closely with her father in Iran during the war. She ultimately transferred to Orange Coast College in California, and found the Orange County area considerably more attractive than Nebraska. California was already becoming a magnet for Iranians even back then.

My wife's family is from Azerbaijan; they were from a town called Rezaiyeh...now called Urmia under the Islamic Republic. In fact, Urmia is the old name of the town, and the name Rezaiyeh was applied at some point after the death of the Shah's father to honor him – Reza Khan Pahlavi. The Azerbaijanis are a Turkic people, who all together account for at least 20% or slightly more of the Iranian population. My wife and her brother are thus among those rare people in the world who have two mother tongues; they grew up speaking both Azerbaijani Turkish and Farsi. It is interesting, since they originally spoke Turkish to one another, that they now converse in either Farsi or – more frequently – in English.

*Q: And you are off to Tehran. By the way did you know two ladies who worked for me whom I thought very highly of, Lynne Lambert and Lange Schermerhorn. Were they in Tehran then?*

FAIRCHILD: Yes indeed. I was formally assigned to the economic/commercial section where Lynne and Lange worked, although I was detailed to and worked most of the time at the trade center. They were great colleagues and friends, and remain so to this day.

*Q: You might want to read their accounts. They are both in our collection.*

FAIRCHILD: I will make sure to do it.

*Q: All right. Today is 6 February 2012 with Al Fairchild. Al where did we leave off?*

FAIRCHILD: We left off where the family Fairchild was about to arrive in Tehran in December of 1975.

*Q: Before you get there what were you getting, I mean what was the feeling from the Bureau or the desk before you arrived there?*

FAIRCHILD: Well, I appreciated the fact that it was considered a very important country from the U.S. perspective in the Middle East. Our policy then was basically to have two pillars in the Middle East, as far as the U.S. was concerned. One was Iran, and the other was Saudi Arabia. I don't think that situation, despite the historic antagonisms between the Persians and the Arabs – especially the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, was quite as bad as what Hans Morgenthau once described as the arms race we ran against ourselves in the India-Pakistan case. It was clear there were tensions in the area, and I believe we were trying to moderate those or at least balance them to our own advantage. Iran was going through a boom, as was Saudi Arabia, in that in 1973 the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) had jacked the price of oil up at the wellhead – and there was a real boomtown aspect to Iran at that time. I think I can give you an example of how bad it was. Everybody in the world was coming to Tehran to sell something to the Iranians, either goods or services or whatever. There was a joke based on an actual fact where an American businessman shows up at the Tehran Hilton in Tehran and says I am so and so do you have my reservation. The desk clerk replies, “Of course we do. We just don't have a room for you.” People were sleeping in the lobby waiting for a room to open up. There was just an absurd amount of business to be done there. Our interest, the U.S. interest, was having a good security relationship with the Shah's government but also to sell American goods and services. The leading suppliers for all kinds of things, in terms of market share, were Germany and Great Britain. I think we were trying to make sure we were ahead of those countries in some way. We were at the time certainly the principal if not the exclusive provider of “defense” weapons to Iran, whether they were fighter aircraft or radar systems.

*Q: I am sure we were.*

FAIRCHILD: But we also wanted to get better on the other side of the economy, and at least increase our market share. That was one of the things I was working on directly, because I was detailed from the Econ/Commercial section to the U.S. Trade Center.

*Q: Well, the Trade Center in Iran. What was it like?*

FAIRCHILD: It was a physically a fairly small operation. It was located on the second floor of a building known as the American Hospital, on Queen Elizabeth Boulevard. This was some distance from the Embassy. It had a fair amount of space for displays but it was a relatively small operation. The Trade Center was managed by the U.S. Department of Commerce, and Peter Dahmlow was the director at the time I first went there. He was eventually replaced by Brooks Ryno, who was director at the time I left a few years later.

*Q: Who was on your team there?*

FAIRCHILD: Well, the deputy director was the chief operating officer of the Trade Center. When I went there it was James Michael von Stroebel. He eventually left on a direct transfer and was replaced by Bob Culver. We used some contractors for various functions, including some Americans who lived in Iran. They would either supplement market research or perform trade

promotion activities. The rest of the employees were Iranian citizens. The senior local employee was a man named Isaac (Ike) Pirnazar, who was from the Iranian Jewish community. He was a very savvy man, who knew everything about how business worked in Iran. I remember one interesting session during one of our trade shows that happened to have a lot of Jewish businessmen from New York. They were telling stories and jokes, and using a lot of Yiddish words, and I remember Ike at one point said, “What does that word mean?” One of the businessmen looked at him and said, “It means this, but what kind of a Jew are you that you don’t know Yiddish. When did your people come here?” Ike looked at him without batting an eyelash, and said, “About 2,500 years ago when Cyrus the Great liberated the Jews from the Babylon.” The New York businessmen just scratched their heads, because I guess they just did not know about the history of the Iranian Jewish community and made certain erroneous assumptions based on their own Ashkenazi background.

*Q: You either had or had to develop expertise in the oil area. I assume the military was taken care of on the side. I mean that was attaché with specific petroleum related duties or another with military related duties, yes.*

FAIRCHILD: We at the Trade Center didn’t deal with anything of a military nature, nor did we get much involved in the oil business, certainly not directly in petroleum or even in oil field equipment. There were regular and long-standing commercial relationships with firms like Schlumberger and Fluor. We even had an attaché who was the oil attaché; he was a Foreign Service officer who knew a lot about that area. When I first arrived in Tehran the oil attaché was David Patterson, and he was later replaced by Richard Bash. We tended to have trade shows at the trade center on themes such as home furnishings or power generation and transmission equipment, or a show on various valves – such as commercial valves or residential valves – but it was definitely in the non-petroleum and non-military areas.

*Q: How responsive did you find American manufacturers were to trade opportunities. Well we are talking about Iran, but just in general that has always been a problem.*

FAIRCHILD: Absolutely. At that time encouraging American firms to get involved in exports was not that easy. I think most American firms, except for big ones that had been in export for a long time, when they thought about expanding they thought about establishing a sub-office in California or something like that. Especially in this part of the world, the Middle East, I think a lot of people were very shy about getting into exports. The metrics the Commerce Department used to judge their effectiveness in these trade promotion events were either the number of “new to export” firms or “new to market” export firms. They did do a sort of a rough estimate of the amount of business generated from the show, but those things are always kind of speculative. Although obviously for a show on power generation and transmission equipment, for example, a company like United Technologies would like to be there – and they were of course already involved in the export business.

*Q: Let’s talk a little bit about the embassy. Who was the ambassador, and how did you all perceive the ambassador and his attitude towards your work?*



FAIRCHILD: The ambassador at the time I arrived and for most of my time in Iran was Richard Helms, former director of the CIA. The DCM at the time was Jack Miklos. I think they had good regard for the work we were doing, and usually the ambassador showed up for the inaugural reception for each trade show that we had. That was important because it put the U.S. government good housekeeping seal of approval on the show. It was good for entertaining and meeting ranking businessmen or government officials too. I would say that Richard Helms was supportive without being intrusive in the work of the trade center. Nor did we want to bother him too much with the statistics or metrics we were tracking for the show, but I think he was satisfied that we were doing a good job. The embassy was fairly supportive, certainly the Econ/commercial section was. A couple of the local employees in the Embassy helped by making sure we had the right businessmen invited to each show.

*Q: What about you might say the business climate there. Because usually when you deal with the Middle East you are talking about people who emerged from the womb of business sense...in all elements good and bad. These are the top shrewdest businesspeople you would ever run across. How did you find that Americans did when they encountered clever Iranian businessmen?*

FAIRCHILD: A lot of American businessmen were very much wary of doing business with Iranian partners. They wanted to make sure they wouldn't be fleeced, although I don't think the Iranian businessmen had the same notion in reverse. In other words they didn't think they would be taken advantage of by their American counterparts. We had a number of people who could help give advice to people trying to set up businesses or partnerships with Iranian companies. There was an excellent American lawyer who practiced there; John Westberg was his name. We subsequently became very good friends with John and his wife Mina. He would frequently give a presentation to the American business representatives participating in our trade shows on the business climate and the legal aspects of doing business in Iran. There were other local firms too that would occasionally provide information too, for example media and advertising firms. I think the really big problems in Iran came with major project operations, those involving multi million-dollar operations. Even though there was a law against bribery on our books, and even though there were laws in Iran with regard to bribery, there was a lot of that done. The bribery would either be an actual cash payment to someone to facilitate a business deal, or in some cases it was an unspoken requirement. In order to have a successful business, it was useful to have some member of the extended royal family on your board of directors, or some connection like that. I think we satisfied the requirements of both U.S. and Iranian law when we told people what the laws were, but let them figure out what they had to do in order to do business.

*Q: Well was there something like what took place in Indonesia, where the wife of Suharto was known as Madame 5% or something. Was there almost a direct connection of payment to a member of the royal family to get better terms or something?*

FAIRCHILD: I am not really aware of the details of arrangements like that, but there were obviously a lot of people talking about that kind of deal. I know there was one businessman who was approached by a member of the government, a minister in fact, for a million dollar up-front gratuity. Again this is just what that one businessman told us, although he did cite the name of the minister in question. Suffice it to say that there was a lot of business to be done, and a lot of palms to be greased.

*Q: A lot of people say consultation fee, finders fee. I mean all sorts of things that are just fees to get things done.*

FAIRCHILD: The trade center didn't get involved in major multi-million dollar projects. I know for example some stories from a British friend of mine who was working at the time for the NKF cable company, the power transmission cable company that Philips owned. Basically he told me about a telecommunications project in Saudi Arabia they were involved in bidding on at that time, and it was a very big one indeed – about four billion dollars. But my friend reckoned that the “bribe” involved must have been about \$250 million, and that the vehicle most likely to be used would be the “good performance bond” posted by whatever consortium won the contract. And the wrinkle of course was that all involved understood that the good performance bond would never be refunded. It would be kept and spread among those who had to be taken care of, if I can speak plainly. What people mostly got involved in is what I would call “baksheesh” as opposed to “reshveh,” a gratuity as opposed to a bribe. For example we had to get goods cleared through customs, just display goods for our trade shows. We asked our freight forwarder, Kuehne and Nagel – a German firm operating there – to make sure that our requests for customs clearances made it to the top of the stack. So each customs folder had perhaps a 1,000 Rial note tucked into it. It was not a lot, about \$140 at the time. This wasn't asking someone to do something that was wrong, it was just saying “please put this on the top of your stack so that we can get our goods cleared for the trade show which opens next Thursday.” That was billed to us by the freight forwarder as “gratuities in keeping with local custom,” or something like that.

*Q: Yes. Two friends of mine, people whom I actually supervised, Foreign Service Officers Lange Schermerhorn, whom I supervised in Saigon, and Lynne Lambert who worked for me in Athens, worked with you in Tehran, didn't they?*

FAIRCHILD: Yes they did. We became very good friends with them, my wife and I. We are still friends and they are both retired and living here in Washington.

*Q: I have interviewed them. How did you find having in a world of business particularly in those days was pretty much a bunch of hard charging men? How did you find having women in an officer capacity working with you?*

FAIRCHILD: I found that both Lynne and Lange were extremely professional and knew their stuff, knew it cold. I am sure they had experiences where businessmen walked in and said, “Are you sure you are the person I am supposed to talk to about this?” But I would assume that after a couple of minutes of conversation that both of them would impress their interlocutors. There were several people in the Econ/commercial section, and most of them were somewhat specialized. Roger Brewin was the head of section while I was there, and David Westley was the commercial attaché. Clyde Taylor was also in the section, although he tended to deal with national accounts, high-level financial information. The oil attaché was also in this section. There were one or two other FSO's, but my impression was that Lynne and Lange carried the biggest part of the burden there. We had local employees too, for example David Kashani and a few talented Armenian ladies who worked in our commercial library.

*Q: Did you find that you had to be rather aggressive to go out, or were Iranian business people coming to you. How did that work?*

FAIRCHILD: I guess the short answer is yes to both. I mean some Iranians would come to the trade center or the econ/commercial section asking to have a number of potential American partners identified. That could either be as simple as giving them access to what we called the Thomas Register, and I suppose it still exists but probably as an online website, or something more directly helpful. Basically the Thomas Register was a big compendium of American firms sorted by sector. Or maybe the inquiries from Iranians were more precise and they wanted you to help facilitate a contact. I know doing my market research I would try to figure out who were the leaders in whatever sector we were talking about, and go after them for interviews. Most people were very receptive. I remember at the very beginning I was having a little bit of trouble because my business card simply said something like “Second Secretary of Embassy and Market Research Officer.” Someone helpfully suggested that to open a few more doors I should change that title to “Second Secretary and Vice Consul.” Businessman might therefore reason that by helping me learn about their sector of the economy and the opportunities there, I might be able to at least schedule an appointment for them for a visa interview rather than their having to go get in a long line and wait hours to approach a consular officer. In fact I did a couple of weeks work in the consulate, at least during my first year, because each officer who arrived with a consular exequatur had to do a couple of weeks of what you might call “public service” and work the student visa line. But we all tried to help our Iranian contacts, not matter what section of the Embassy we worked in, to have an appointment for a visa interview rather than stand in that line that stretched for blocks.

*Q: Did you have problems with Americans who represented either fly by night organizations or organizations that were somewhat dubious in a business sense?*

FAIRCHILD: I am sure there were plenty of those people who met that description, although I think they tended to deal mostly with the embassy’s economic/commercial section as opposed to the trade center. The trade center is pretty much focused on specific shows, shows either at the trade center or at the Tehran International Trade Fair. All of the American participants in our trade shows or at the Tehran International Trade Fair were vetted in the United States by the Commerce Department. So I don’t think we got any “fly by nighters” in that process.

*Q: Did you have good connections with what I guess was the Suq, the market. I mean this is a major element economic and political in Iran, always has been.*

FAIRCHILD: Yes, indeed. In Iran the Suq, as the Arabs call it, is referred to as the bazaar. The old bazaar in the southern part of Tehran at that time was huge; it still is. You can get lost in there. It is not like the Grand Bazaar, the Kapali Çarşı, in Istanbul for example. Which is as clean as a whistle and has got direction signs everywhere. You can’t possibly get lost in the Istanbul bazaar. The Tehran bazaar was a monstrous thing without any signs, and you just had to ask people how do you get from here to there and how to find one’s way out of it. A lot of the very big important businessmen in Iran started off as “bazaaris.” They used to have, for example, leather shops, but then they moved on to producing shoes in factories. My wife has some very close family friends, I guess you could call them “kissing cousins,” and the head of that family was the son of a big “bazaari” from Tabriz in the north. But people like them moved from originally having shops in

the bazaar , or rather their fathers or grandfathers did, to eventually having multi-million dollar companies. In the case of my wife's family friend, he was the Caterpillar representative for Iran and had a number of other businesses – for example a water irrigation equipment firm.

*Q: Are there some areas you want to cover here?*

FAIRCHILD: Well I thought I might say a word about the life of Embassy employees in those days because it was quite difficult. There was rampant inflation, of course, and at least when we arrived the Embassy had a policy of being fairly tight with money when it came to housing. The net result was that if you were a relatively new person, and were someone who was not in a house that was contracted for in a long term lease prior to the OPEC price increases, you generally did not get a fairly nice house but more likely an apartment – and not a very large one. We had a modest three bedroom apartment, a second floor walk-up, that was just barely enough for both of us and the two children. Plus Tehran was a pretty difficult urban environment. They had traffic jams that you wouldn't believe. Lots of pollution from automobiles filled the air, and in the winter there was a lot of soot from heaters that used heating oil. Sometimes you could just see the solid particulates in the air. The traffic was always just plain unspeakable, however. I remember our second night in town we were invited to sort of a "hail and farewell" reception at the economic counselor's home that was in the northern part of the city. It took us about an hour and a half to get there. We just didn't know whether to laugh or cry. That was our introduction to Tehran traffic. With the housing allowance, the embassy's attitude was not just to be stingy. There was a policy decision not to contribute to the inflation, and there were a lot of official Americans in town. So that made perhaps some sense, but ultimately when the Embassy's management changed a bit later so did that policy. With the change of Administrative Counselors from Roger Proventure, who was counselor when we arrived, to Bob Jingles, there seemed to be a realization that it wasn't just the American Embassy staff that was feeding inflation but rather everyone who lived in Tehran. Bob Jingles advocated for trying to get an increase in the housing allowance, and our people did much better after that. In our own case, for example we were looking for a house. When we first arrived, my wife was having trouble finding something on her own, mainly because the Iranians were afraid that she would be more Iranian than American and that once we had a lease we would sit on it. They did have laws at that time that favored tenants quite a bit. So I ended up having to do a lot of the house hunting myself, which was not easy. Our apartment was in a more traditional neighborhood. Not a bad neighborhood, but not one where there were lots of Americans. It was called Yusefabad, on the western side of town. Although for our last year, this was after the change of policy, we were able to rent a small house on the other side of town a little further to the north, which had much more space and was just more comfortable.

*Q: You were there form when to when?*

FAIRCHILD: We arrived in early December of 1975 and left in the summer of 1978, on June 21 to be exact. As people reading this account will remember, this was not a bad time to leave Iran...especially if one's spouse was Iranian by birth.

*Q: How were you seeing the political situation while you were there?*

FAIRCHILD: I think we, as most people in the Embassy did, regarded the Shah's regime as being pretty solid. We did not encounter many people who were part of the opposition, although there clearly were a lot of problems with Iranian society. A couple of weeks before we arrived two American colonels were gunned down behind the embassy by the people who are currently trying to get themselves de-listed from the State Department's list of terrorist organization. They were the Mujahedin-e-Khalq, or MEK as they say now. This leopard has allegedly changed its spots, or so they and their supporters now claim. I don't know whether that is true or not, but they were very active back in the 1970s, and they were obviously and ferociously repressed by the Shah's regime. There were some signs of discontent, and some people would let slip remarks that probably could have been enough to get them in trouble with the state security organization – SAVAK. I would pass any information of a serious nature I came by to the political section, but frankly there wasn't that much to report. For example, I would occasionally hear cab drivers make negative comments about the government, but I never considered those very seriously because I think cabbies like to grumble a lot – whether they're in New York or Tehran. I also thought that disgruntled commentators might be some sort of *agent provocateur* operation trying to sniff out who among the Americans didn't like the regime. I also remember at a reception in late 1977 a man who was a relatively senior official in the agricultural development bank was talking to me. He looked around carefully in all directions, and then asked, "Why have you Americans imposed this family on us?" Meaning the Pahlavi family, of course. I talked to him for a little while, and I was stunned that somebody raised that issue in that manner. I also knew through my wife's extended family people who were retired senior military officers who had contracting businesses, or people who were actually in SAVAK. SAVAK stands for Sazeman-e-Ettelaat va Amniyat-e-Keshvar, and basically means the state intelligence and security organization. They would make comments against the regime, not so much because of political repression but rather because of corruption issues. Sometimes it would be as simple as "I don't think I am getting my fair share of the pie," or "it is just terrible because you just can't do anything around here without paying someone off." But in our final year, 1978, there were some events that seemed odd. In the early part of the year, January, there were two or three days of rioting in Tabriz, the second largest city in Iran. No forces of order came in to try to control it. And the places attacked were mostly banks, liquor stores, movie houses and any business operation that was closely identified with the regime. I remember meeting a cousin of a cousin of my wife once at a party; he was a SAVAK officer. I asked, "What is this disorder in Tabriz all about? How come nobody tried to control that?" He answered, "Well, our orders were don't do anything, just look around, take names, and keep them for future reference." That somehow just didn't sound credible. Our impression later was that things started coming unglued almost the day after we left. I mean they started having more serious demonstrations, and then there was this big fire in a movie house in Abadan, where a number of people were killed and supposedly someone had locked the doors. Things moved very quickly, and in the following February, February of 1979, the embassy was seized the first time. It was just a one-day occupation, and the police or the army turned out those who had seized the embassy. People should have known then, and I think Washington did know at that point, there was something seriously wrong going on in Iran.

*Q: Did you probably wouldn't have much contact with the universities and all? I mean were they a hotbed of...*

FAIRCHILD: I think they were. I would occasionally see some political reporting about that. But I basically had no dealings with the universities or the people there. We simply didn't know any students.

*Q: How about the bazaaris? Were they saying anything to you or not?*

FAIRCHILD: No, they were not, whether they were actual bazaaris down in the bazaar selling carpets or samovars or whatever, or the bug businessmen who used to be bazaaris. I know that most bazaaris, like most Iranians of the social class we knew, had some religious person they helped support even if they were not necessarily religious people. They helped take care of a mullah who was close to the family, for example. I know that a number of bazaaris were instrumental in distributing the audio cassettes that contained sermons by Ayatollah Khomeini, cassettes that were smuggled in from at first Iraq when he was in exile in Najaf. Then later, once the Iraqis expelled him, he ended up in France and still kept making cassettes and having them distributed in Iran.

*Q: Well when you left there in 1978 was there a feeling of relief. How did you feel about it?*

FAIRCHILD: Well, it was a bit more complicated. I never felt uncomfortable in Iran except once, and this was once in 1978. It was at the time of a religious holiday called Ashura, which commemorates the death of Imam Hussein back in the first century of Islam.

*Q: Is that where people beat themselves?*

FAIRCHILD: That is right. I had just finished visiting a friend across town. It was on a weekend, so I guess it was either Saturday or Sunday. As I was coming back I had to stop at an intersection since traffic was being held up by a policeman to let this procession go by. There were several groups, all marching in unison, and they were flagellating themselves with tire chains chanting "Ya Hussein, Ya Ali." I had seen that before, at least on television, but I had never seen an organized parade like this. I remember looking around at the people who were standing around my car as I was being held back from crossing this intersection by this policeman. They all looked quite hostile. They didn't look like the kind of people one normally saw in north Tehran. They men had about a three or four day five o'clock shadow, and they all just looked unhappy or angry. The license plate on my car said "diplomatic" on it, "siyasi" in Farsi. I thought to myself I don't think I want to be here any more. So, even though the policeman still had his hand out to hold traffic back, when there was a gap between two groups of the flagellants – or whatever you want to call them – I just popped the car into first gear, shot across the intersection, and went home. I remember mentioning it to my wife, who commented, "Well I guess there were a lot of people from south Tehran." I still didn't feel particularly threatened, and in fact I tried to stay on in Tehran. I think I mentioned earlier that the job I had, perhaps because it had been created as a Foreign Service position to serve another agency, was put on a list of positions to be abolished the coming summer. I think every U.S. embassy that year was asked name a position or two that could be cut, one of those periodic cost saving operations. So I had to cast about for a job, and I approached people in the political section about staying on there. They were in touch with Washington about it, but there didn't seem to be a lot of interest or enthusiasm at the time. Either there was insufficient interest in retaining me in Tehran, or perhaps the bureaucratic hurdles involved seemed

insurmountable. I therefore started getting in touch with some old friends from the Africa bureau, because I knew what was going to happen was that my Tehran job was going to be abolished probably late May or early June, and that is the middle of the transfer cycle. It is more than difficult when you are in a job that still exists and you are not theoretically eligible for transfer. But it worked out. The job in question was the DCM job in a small embassy in Africa, and I thought that was a good career move, so we were looking forward to it. But I didn't feel a sense of relief when we left because I think at that time, in spite of all these developments, we still thought that the regime could maintain itself.

*Q: Well what was your impression of the Shah and the ruling family while you were there?*

FAIRCHILD: I think our impression was they were very aloof, perhaps not well tuned in to what a lot of the Iranian people were thinking at the time. In their attempts to do what you might otherwise consider good things, they occasionally stumbled and did foolish things that hastened their decline. For example, the Empress Farah was a great patron of the arts. The annual Shiraz festival was part of that. They brought lots of entertainers from Europe, ballets and so forth, but one of the ballet groups was a Danish ballet and at the time they were dancing half nude. And I don't mean traditional ballet costumes. This was put on television, and I think a lot of people probably saw that – as television had spread across the country – and considered it either in bad taste, or sacrilegious, or immoral. I know the Empress also got involved with the restoration of old buildings, like the mausoleum of Oljeitu up in Northwestern Iran. Oljeitu was one of the last of the Mongol rulers of Iran, and he had converted to Islam or was at least absorbed by Islamic culture. He built this really wonderful mausoleum for himself, and it had fallen into disrepair over the centuries. I think it was built in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. So projects like that were undeniably good. But I think there were elements of royal exaggerations that didn't sit well with many Iranians. A lot of this exaggeration was also traditional in Iran, because the Pahlavis came to the throne through a coup led by the Shah's father, Reza Khan. There is this long tradition of monarchy, and everybody from the Qajars back to the Safavids and even ancient Persia had their own royal pretensions and costumes and court protocol. The Shah, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, liked to say this started 2500 years ago and he was proud to continue that tradition. Well, it was a tradition. It was not the same royal family, and rulers changed frequently as did dynasties over the centuries. We, meaning officers of my rank in the embassy, didn't have contact with the royal family. I know the ambassador and DCM saw them frequently. I think most of the contacts between the embassy and most of the levels of Iranian society were probably with government officials, the prime minister and other ministers of the government, and successful business people. I am sure the American ambassador met frequently with the Shah, however, as did the British ambassador.

*Q: On the business side were you looking over your shoulder at the Germans, the British and the Japanese and the French? Were they your rivals or not?*

FAIRCHILD: Yes, I think so although I think it was if not a friendly competition at least a civilized one. We didn't go out of our way to sabotage other people's trade shows or anything, and I think the assumption was that the pie was certainly big enough to have slices for everyone. We were just trying to make sure that our slice – our market share – was larger than that of the other folks.

*Q: Well then you say you were going after a DCM job in Africa. What happened when you left?*

FAIRCHILD: You mean how I came to get that job?

*Q: Yes, how did that come about?*

FAIRCHILD: Well, when I knew I would need a new job I got in contact with a former boss of mine from the educational and cultural affairs bureau, Bill Edmondson, who was then a Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Africa Bureau. I explained to him I was going to fetch up in a month or two without a job, and was wondering if there was something good in Africa. He asked if I'd be interested in a small country DCM-ship, and I said I certainly was. So he said that he would have the executive director of the bureau call me within a day or two, which he did. His name was Dick Salazar, and he called me up and told me that I had been suggested as DCM for three embassies: Togo, Benin, and the Central African Republic. Although at that time it was known as the Central African Empire for reasons that I will explain later. So he then called back another day saying that my file had gone out, and that a man named Goodwin Cooke would like me to be his DCM in Bangui in a month or two. "How does that sound to you?", asked Salazar. I said "Sounds good, but I would like about 24 hours to mull things over and check it out." He then said, "What are you going to check?" I replied by saying "I am going to check with people who know what the Central African Empire is all about, and try to contact people who know Goodwin Cooke." I didn't want to buy a pig in a poke, to use a fine old Southern expression. Everything seemed to work out and I accepted the Bangui DCM-ship. We left on direct transfer in late June, and had about a week or ten day vacation in Rome. I had wanted to show Parvin and the kids Rome, St. Peter's, the Coliseum, and all that. We also used the occasion to do some shopping because Bangui in the Central African Empire was not the kind of place where you had lots of stores where you could get new clothes.

*Q: Goody Cooke, I supervised him in Belgrade for awhile.*

FAIRCHILD: Is that when Larry Eagleburger was there.

*Q: Larry and I did Serbia together. and we came out together.*

FAIRCHILD: Goody Cooke was a wonderful boss, and I think what made him wonderful was he had just been DCM for an ambassador who was not very good, or at least didn't treat Goody very well.

*Q: Where was that?*

FAIRCHILD: That was in Abidjan in the Ivory Coast. The Ambassador's name was Robert Solwin Smith, and in fact I knew him because he had been a deputy assistant secretary in the Africa Bureau before. I thought Smith was very sharp at that time, and he handled all resource issues – especially aid and commercial issues. But apparently he wasn't very kind to his DCM. So Goody had this in mind, and he wanted to make sure he treated his DCM the right way and used him well. Also I had not taken the DCM course as it was a direct transfer. Goody was very thoughtful, and I remember very early on we had a chat that some people today might call the "psychological contract" even though nothing is written on paper. I remember Goody saying



something like this: “ I want you to feel free to contact anybody in this government, and be on good relations with them and entertain them, but two people are mine exclusively. You have to know them of course, because you have to deal with them when I’m out of town, but as long as I am around I am their principal contact, and they are the president of the country and the French ambassador.” Being a former French colony the French ambassador was not only the most important ambassador in town but also was the dean of the diplomatic corps. It was very sensible of Goody to set up these ground rules early on. Also later on for one reason or another we had a conversation about the workload in the embassy. We only had 10 people in the embassy, including Goody and me, and there was an American director of the Peace Corps in addition to the Embassy staff. But otherwise there were just ten of us. At one point Goody said something like “Are we both fully employed?” I said, “I don’t think so. I think there is enough work here for about 1.5 top bosses in the Embassy.” He said, “That is my impression too, and my solution to that problem is to start letting you do a little bit more and I will work on my tennis game, or something else.”

*Q: All right, well let’s talk about the Central African Empire. What was the political context you were in?*

FAIRCHILD: Could I back up just for a bit?

*Q: Sure.*

FAIRCHILD: Just one or two final additional comments on Iran. We did travel quite a bit there. I remember my parents came for a visit in 1977, and we took them on a trip south where we got to see Isfahan and Shiraz, also Persepolis. We also on our own traveled to the northwest to visit my late mother-in-law in Rezaiyeh, which is the second city of Iranian Azerbaijan – the first being Tabriz. So we did get around the country quite a bit. We also had a visit from the Secretary of State Kissinger, in 1976, for a chief of mission conference. That is where I got to meet the formidable Thomas Pickering for the first time. He was as impressive then as he still is today. One of the people from the Secretary’s staff at the time was the late Arnie Raphel, who had been in my A-100 class. It was good to see Arnie again, and I recall that Lange Schermerhorn and I pried him away from the group for a nice lunch at a restaurant near the Embassy. Arnie had started his career in Iran, and ended up spending five or six years there. He was in the south, Isfahan I think, and then he was in Tehran. I guess the last big visit we had was the visit of President and Mrs. Carter on New Years Eve Day 1977. That was when the President made that famous comment about Iran, saying that it was like “an island of tranquility in a sea of turmoil.” I think that was a good summation of the official U. S. attitude at the time. Things went sour obviously not too long after that.

I would like to mention one personal thing in connection with the Carter visit. My parents had been always somewhat active in Democratic Party politics, at least at the North Carolina State level. When they learned that the President and Mrs. Carter were going, my parents took it upon themselves to write to the White House. They didn’t have any particular request, and they certainly weren’t that influential in the party, but basically they wrote to say they were happy that the Carters were going to Iran. They knew that my wife, Parvin, would be one of the people helping Mrs. Carter when she visited the Abbasi carpet museum there since Parvin had been asked by the Embassy to help out with the First Lady’s program. We didn’t think much of it, but thought that

my parents were just being overly proud of their son and daughter-in-law. Well, Mrs. Carter got out of the limousine and when she walked into the museum Parvin was there with the museum director. The first thing she said was, "Oh Parvin, how nice to meet you. Your mother-in-law has written to me about the wonderful job you are doing here." We were just stunned that this had happened. I guess that is just the way Southern folks are, even transplanted ones like my father. They don't mind writing letters like that, and on the receiving side they don't mind going out of their way to be nice as Mrs. Carter certainly was. I would just add, parenthetically, that after my father died, Mother moved to the Washington D.C. area and did volunteer work for several years in Hillary Clinton's correspondence office when she was first lady.

But maybe we should go back to the Central African Republic at this point.

*Q: Let's talk about that. When you arrived first.*

FAIRCHILD: We arrived not too many days before the Fourth of July reception. In fact I think that was one of the requirements laid out in my assignment there. One of the reasons for that was the fact that our then ambassador, Tony Quanton, had already left about three weeks before. Grant Smith was the chargé at the time, and I was replacing him as DCM. Grant was going to leave a week or two after that, so they wanted me to get in the saddle and get introduced to *le tout Bangui* at the Fourth of July Reception. We arrived at about 10:00 at night, and were taken straight to the empty ambassadorial residence. We were housed there since there was no ambassador and Grant and his wife were still in the DCM residence. The ambassador's residence was very nice, very comfortable, and we certainly enjoyed that. The country was a typical infrastructure-poor African country, totally landlocked as its name implies, the Central African Empire. It was under the less than enlightened rule of Jean Bedel Bokassa, who had started life as a soldier in the French Army. Bokassa had a fairly distinguished career, certainly for someone from the colonial troop background. He served with some distinction in Vietnam, and eventually became chief of staff of the armed forces of the Central African Republic, from which position he launched a coup at the end of 1966 against the then president of the country, David Dacko. But at some point in the 1970's, he got it into his head that if Europe could have emperors then why couldn't African countries have emperors. I guess he had the local example of the Ethiopian emperors. He claimed to see some parallels between his career and life with that of Napoleon. So he determined to have himself crowned as emperor, and it occurred in December 1977. The Embassy calculated that he spent about \$30 million on his coronation, which at the time was about one third of the annual budget of the whole Central African government.

There is an interesting story about the coronation that I'd like to tell you. One of the people I got very friendly with there was the Papal Nuncio, Bishop Oriano Quilici. We were chatting once about Bokassa, and I asked the Nuncio what role if any he had with the coronation. He said, "Bokassa called me in several months before the coronation. He told me about all these things in common he had with Napoleon, and said that it would be really much appreciated if the Holy Father could come from Rome and put a crown upon his head there in Bangui. He also promised not to snatch it away and put it on his own head as Napoleon did." Quilici replied to Bokassa's request by saying that he would forward the request to Rome, but was not sure the Holy Father would be able to officiate at the coronation. So, he eventually went back with a formal reply, which of course he drafted and which was approved by the Vatican, that stated, "The Holy Father

no longer does this sort of thing, but we will designate our good friend and confidante the Papal Nuncio Oriano Quilici to be the representative of the Holy See at your coronation.” With the stipulation, however, that Quilici take no part in the ceremony, although the Nuncio was authorized to have a Te Deum at the cathedral following the coronation. The Nuncio was somewhat nervous when he took this answer to Bokassa because he was known to have a pretty nasty temper. But in the event he took it quite placidly, and said “Oh well, that is all right, how about a Cardinal then?” To which Quilici very cleverly said, “Well I am sorry, but since the Holy Father has already designated me, it just wouldn’t do to go back and try to change that.”

*Q: Well the French, or rather Mitterrand, put quite a bit of money into this didn't they?*

FAIRCHILD: Mitterrand came later. He was elected in 1981. When we were there Valery Giscard d’Estaing was President of France. I think he came for a private visit once while we were there, a hunting trip as I recall, but it wasn’t one....

*Q: I thought the French helped in the coronation.*

FAIRCHILD: Oh, they did. Most foreign governments except the United States and maybe the USSR, well maybe the Soviet Union did something after all. I know the French provided or helped provide some of the Limoges dinnerware for the imperial household. I think they also provided a dozen or more white horses to pull the royal carriage. Most of the poor horses died because they couldn’t adapt to the climate, the equatorial climate of the CAE. The Germans donated about 30 BMW motorcycles for the imperial bodyguard. But I believe only the French supplied cash support for the coronation, and the French were of course the biggest aid donor there. I don’t know how much they spent every year but it was an awful lot – many millions. They had aid projects as well as direct budgetary support for the government. At one point I discussed this issue with the subsequent French ambassador. When I first showed up there the French Ambassador was Robert Piquet. I didn’t really talk these issues with him, but with his successor, Jacques Humann, a delightful and straightforward Alsatian, I did discuss them. Ambassador Humann urged us to start the AID program again after Bokassa was overthrown in a coup designed by the French, which is something I will discuss a bit later. I said that we would try to do that but it would be modest. He said, “Well you give about \$240 million to Sudan, now why don’t you give at least half of that here?” My reply was something of a non-answer, but went like this: “Mr. Ambassador, why don’t we agree that the United States will continue supporting Sudan the way we do now, and you don’t have to do anything there. You will carry the larger burden here, however, and we will do something very much more modest.” He said, “I think I get your drift.” So that is how that was left. The CAR had been a French colony that was formerly called the Territory of Ubangui-Shari, which refers to two rivers, the Ubangi in the south and the Shari in the north, demarcating the northern and southern borders of the colony.

*Q: Was Bokassa, later there was a rumor that he had the bodies of little children in his deep freeze and all that. A whole series of you might say horror stories grew up around this man. Had this started at that time or not?*

FAIRCHILD: There were occasionally people who gave him trouble who disappeared, or ended up in jail for a long time and subsequently died there. But it wasn’t anything on a massive scale.

While we were in Bangui there were protests against Bokassa, mainly by university or high school students. A couple hundred students were rounded up in 1979, and were stuffed into some pretty tight cells in a prison not too far from the house that we lived in. Some of them suffocated and died there, so that became a major human rights issue. Human rights were consistently disregarded by the Bokassa regime. This cannibalistic thing you asked about was real, but it was what I would call ritual cannibalism as opposed to a regular source of protein. I am told that this was a practice of the M'Baka tribe from which Bokassa came, and was part of their old traditions. I just don't know the extent of that practice, however. I do know after the coup against Bokassa the French alleged that they found some grisly things in the royal meat locker. That caused some speculation on how widespread cannibalism was, but I also know that there was a French interest in discrediting the Bokassa regime – so maybe there was no sound basis for this story. I remember when I heard about the imperial meat locker discoveries, and told Washington about it – you remember I was chargé for my whole third and last year there – I asked my wife if she remembered when we were invited to the palace for a dinner if we were ever served any *pate maison*. Fortunately we recalled it was either fish or chicken when we were entertained. We were quite satisfied that we never partook of Bokassa's enemies – if in fact those cannibalism stories were true.

*Q: I am reading a book called Flyboys which is about American naval pilots who were captured by the Japanese during WWII. On one island Chichi-jima the general there was great for having some of the pilots executed and the doctor taking out their liver and it would be served sort of as a sushi.*

FAIRCHILD: That is rather grisly.

*Q: Yes. So it is not unknown in the "civilized" world. When you got there, what were Goody and the others in our embassy saying about Bokassa?*

FAIRCHILD: I think the general attitude was that he had a pretty firm grip on power and there wasn't much that could be done about that. It probably wasn't in the perceived interest of the United States to get involved in any sort of regime change there. At least that was the initial reaction. As things got worse on the human rights front we became much more active, even to the point of cutting off all our little USAID projects. We were spending \$750,000 to \$800,000 a year, mostly on health projects or health related projects. We had no USAID presence there and we were served by the USAID regional office in Cameroon next door. So our interest and activities were satisfying "basic human needs," which was the term used for such assistance programs at that time. While we were not complicit in the coup that ousted Bokassa in September 1979, we certainly welcomed it and recognized the new government immediately. The new government was headed by the same David Dacko whom Bokassa had overthrown back in 1966. The coup that ousted Bokassa was primarily "made in France." The French I think finally decided that he was an embarrassment, and they had the support of many leading Central Africans to undertake the coup. Dacko went on the radio in the early hours of the day of the coup and said, "I am the only person who has ever been elected to head this country, and I am back." I think that was a fairly compelling argument.

*Q: Well, now can you talk about the relations that I think are important, namely those with the French. The American relations, the embassy. How did this...*

FAIRCHILD: I think relations between the French and us were very close indeed. We were close, both in a policy sense as well as in our social life. My wife and I, as were the Cookes, were very close with the people in the French embassy – the ambassador, the DCM, the cultural attaché, the head of their aid program, their Consul General, and others. I think we fully recognized they were very much in the driver's seat on both the policy and assistance side, and that we could best accomplish our limited U.S. objectives in the country by supplementing what they did. The connections with these former French colonies and France are very tight, or at least were so in the 1970s and 1980s. For example, they had their own big aid programs through the *Ministere de la Cooperation* that were not always well connected to the policy side of the French foreign ministry, and sometimes their aid people tended to act almost independently. They also had the *Payerie de France* that was an extension of the French Ministry of Finance. They did things like pay pensions to Central Africans who had formerly been in the French military. In fact Bokassa was very proud of his previous service and would go, I was told, in person every month to the *Payerie de France* to get his pension check. And of course the Church was very active in Central Africa.

*Q: You mean the Catholic Church.*

FAIRCHILD: The Catholic Church. We became very good friends with the Archbishop of Bangui, Joachim N'Dayen. He was actually a cousin of Bokassa, and one of the few people – perhaps the only person – who could address him critically in public. Bokassa would occasionally attend Mass at the cathedral on major feasts or special events, and would sit in the throne-like chair that was there for the chief of state. On such occasions the archbishop would deliver a sermon that was usually on how good rulers behave and how bad rulers behave. Clearly he was lecturing his cousin on how to behave as chief of state. I was personally present for at least two such homilies, not that they had much of an impact on Bokassa's behavior. And there was an active group of European religious people: a number of French priests, Dutch priests, and Italian nuns. I also became fairly friendly with the chief administrative officer of the archdiocese, Father Lamerand, who was someone who had what the Church calls a "late vocation." He had actually been married before, and after his wife died he decided to become a priest. As I said he was basically the administrative officer for the archdiocese. In our program of Self-Help projects we tried to involve the religious community if possible on at least one project per year. But we also liked to be even-handed in this, so one year we would do it with the Catholic Church and the following year we would do it with one of the Protestant missionary groups.

*Q: Did the French have troops there?*

FAIRCHILD: They certainly did. Near a town called Bouar, there was a French military base, at a distance of about a hundred kilometers from Bangui. There were I think about 400 to 500 troops there at the time, and it was one of the major French "*points d'appui*" - the support bases that they had in Africa. They had something similar but probably larger in Gabon and in Senegal. One never saw these French troops in Bangui, however. Their role was not to be active in Central African affairs, but to be ready to respond to crises or intervene elsewhere in Africa when needed.

*Q: Was Qadhafi messing around there?*

FAIRCHILD: Absolutely. He was quite active. His ambassador, for example, and their staff paid the highest salaries to their employees, with the net result that they were able to wean the better people away from other diplomatic employers. Qadhafi also promised large amounts of aid, only a little bit of which got delivered to the CAR. He wanted something in return. There was one period prior to our arrival where he had promised a couple of million dollars to Bokassa on the proviso that Bokassa and the leading members of Central African government convert to Islam. Many, including Bokassa, had dutifully done that. But I don't think Qadhafi ever came across with the cash, so most people went back to the Church or to whatever they were before.

The former prime minister, a man named Ange Patasse, converted at that time and took the name Harun Al-Rashid Patasse. Patasse was out of power, and in fact in the political doghouse, when Dacko took power following the coup. He called on me once in the Embassy, after I refused to meet with him elsewhere and secretly, and he seemed almost certifiable. He used only the first person plural, as if he were king, and had a delusional quality to most of his political plans. Patasse became chief of state several years later, and when faced with military mutinies called upon help from a Congolese warlord. Those were the times when a number of unspeakable atrocities were carried out by Congolese mercenaries against Central African civilians.

*Q: I have interviewed Tony Quainton who talks about this sort of surreal thing when Qadhafi came to Bangui, including Bokassa putting on native dances for him with bare breasted women, and of course all these supposed Muslims who came with Qadhafi were sort of intrigued, you might say.*

FAIRCHILD: Bokassa frequently hosted events at his palace, which was called the Palace of the Renaissance, *Palais de la Renaissance*. Following dinner there was this terribly long session of what they called "*animation*," meaning the dances to which you referred. Usually the ladies auxiliary of the sole political party did the dancing, or rhythmic chanting of praises for Bokassa with something like line dancing. The idea was to follow the *animation* with ballroom dancing by the guests. Fortunately by the time we got there Bokassa was getting old, and I guess he was getting feeble from drinking too much so he would call the festivities to a close at midnight. But I think in Tony Quainton's time he would have a dance band come on and there would be dancing almost until dawn. They would also lock the doors so the diplomatic corps, which I sometimes called the *Décor Diplomatique* because we were trotted out for every kind of event or visitor who came through, were stuck in that palace until the dancing ended and Bokassa was ready to retire.

*Q: Did we as you say towards the end of his time there we became more active in human rights. How did this manifest itself.*

FAIRCHILD: Well, we had made certain protests against the behavior we learned of, but primarily it was by simply cutting off our assistance programs. Before that cutoff was announced, I must have been chargé at the time because I was called into the foreign ministry about a broadcast on the Voice of America which I had not heard, that talked about the human rights abuses in the country. I remember the three people who talked to me were the foreign minister, the Central African ambassador to the United States who happened to be in Bangui at the time, and the political director of the foreign ministry. They basically said that the U.S. should not make broadcasts like this since it amounts to interference in the internal affairs of another country. I said,

“I have not heard the broadcast, but I will be sure to find out what was said.” I did note that I couldn’t really comment until I knew precisely what was said, but that as far as American history goes we have made a practice of paying attention to these issues. I noted that there were even American ministers to the Czarist government in Russia who made formal complaints about the treatment of the Czar’s Jewish citizens by his officials back before the Bolshevik Revolution. This is the way Americans are, I explained, and this is what American policy is, and thus no one should expect the United States not to make comments on human rights abuses wherever they occur. They were all quiet after that, and I am sure they knew exactly what my response would be. They were just following orders, and needed to be able to say they had called in the American chargé d’affaires and chewed him out.

*Q: How did you address Bokassa, as your imperial highness or what?*

FAIRCHILD: The proper form of address was *votre majeste imperial*. Or you would refer to him in the third person as *sa majeste imperial*. Before Goody Cooke arrived I was chargé for a couple of months, and at one point was talking to the chief of protocol to find out how to do the presentation of letters ceremony – meaning the letters of accreditation that Goody would have to present to the emperor. During this meeting the chief of protocol was telling me about how to entertain members of the government, and the imperial court properly. There was sort of a mirror image in the imperial court for government functions, so there was a counselor in the imperial court for foreign affairs for example. It was not the Minister of Foreign Affairs, but someone who was supposedly well versed in foreign affairs and who might have been a minister at some point in the past. The guidance from the chief of protocol was that these people shouldn’t be served ordinary whisky, for example White Horse scotch. He actually told me that we should serve Chivas Regal or another premium scotch. You shouldn’t serve an ordinary sparkling wine, a *cremant* for example. You should serve a real champagne – Veuve Clicquot if possible. But his guidance soon became even more incredible. He also said if you are at a public function and the name of His Imperial Majesty Bokassa I Emperor of All Central Africa is mentioned, you should incline your head slightly. With my tongue firmly wedged in my cheek, I enquired, “Should it be slightly less, to the same degree, or more that good Catholics are supposed to incline their head at the mention of the name Jesus when they are attending Mass?” He gave me a look that was right out of what I can only call the heart of darkness, and said, “Since you are diplomatic personnel I guess you are exempt from this kind of thing.” Total theater of the absurd, or as Tony said surreal protocol.

*Q: Did you have visitors there? I would think there would be a problem with most European and American visitors to make sure they didn’t giggle.*

FAIRCHILD: We had no visitors of note there, certainly not U.S. government officials. Not even from the Department of State – at least while I was there. I was there for three years, as DCM for two and then Chargé for the last year. I was Chargé for my final year by the way because we had trouble getting the ambassador who had been nominated out there. This was because there was a list of seven or eight ambassadorial nominations, and Arthur Woodruff who was to be Goody’s successor was on that list. The whole list was blocked in the Senate by Jesse Helms because he wanted to grill Henry Precht, who was on the list for Mauritania, about who lost Iran. Henry had been the head of the Iran desk at State while the Iranian revolution occurred, and since he had not

held deputy assistant secretary rank and thus was not at a “policy level” the Department opposed his testifying as Helms wanted. So we went for a whole year without an ambassador, although I enjoyed the experience of being chargé; it was an eye opener about the responsibilities one has when in charge of an embassy and what limits one needs to impose on oneself. But it was good to be in charge, as Mel Books said in that funny movie History of the World Part I “it’s good to be the king.”

I have just one more example of sort of the surreal things that went on there. The telephone system didn’t work at all because the land lines had all been rotted out and they hadn’t been replaced. People brought notes around, or used radio communication. We in the embassy for example had little radio sets that we would use in our homes to connect us. It worked fairly well, but of course you had to keep their batteries charged. One afternoon when I was chargé I got a note from protocol convoking me to appear at 4:00 that afternoon for the ceremony of the “baptism of the street.” They were naming the street in front of the cathedral after the Empress Catherine, the primary (but not the only) wife of the emperor. This was to be followed by a Te Deum in the cathedral. So I got dressed up and went to this thing, and got there a little bit early. I guess because of the alphabetical order they had me sitting next to the North Korean ambassador. Both Koreas were represented in Bangui at this time, but I didn’t want to sit next to the North Korean because he didn’t speak to anyone except the Chinese and would occasionally spit on the floor. So I just traded his name card for the much more friendly Ivorian ambassador, the ambassador of the Ivory Coast. The Ivorian ambassador, Jean-Marie Agnini Bile-Malan, was also a good friend and fellow member of the Lions Club. So, this ceremony occurred, and after it ended and we were dutifully trekking along the road to the cathedral when we were given invitations to a black tie dinner that night at the palace. This abrupt command-performance invitation also had implications for our social schedule in that we were to host a dinner at our home that night for about a dozen people, including a couple of ambassadors and their spouses. I figured even if I left right after the Te Deum was over I would get home with very little time to spare and my wife wouldn’t know about the event. So I grabbed the invitation and wrote a message to Parvin on the back of it, rejoicing that I still had a car and driver there and could get word to her. I was standing next to the Soviet Chargé whose name was Kirsanov. In spite of being the Soviet Chargé, Kirsanov was a very pleasant person. He was clearly distressed, saying “Oh my God what am I going to do? Poor Madame Kirsanov is not going to know about this.” I said, “Why don’t you just do as I did, write on the back of the invitation card a note to your wife and I will have my driver deliver it to the Soviet Embassy.” He was extremely grateful for that. So both notes were sent off to both wives, and sure enough we all went to the palace that night for another memorable evening of woodenly formal dining and an hour or so of “animation” entertainment. But that kind of thing happened all the time, and there was very little notice with the phones not working. You would get an invitation or a confirmation about an hour ahead of whatever was going to happen.

*Q: How did you find dealing with Bokassa nose to nose, I mean what was he like?*

FAIRCHILD: The only time I was close to him or engaged in conversation was the ceremony when Goody presented his credentials, his letters of credence. Bokassa was quite chatty. He actually spoke quite well. It wasn’t very elegant French, but he spoke it well. This was sort of elevated small talk basically. I remember when I first arrived there, I think it was the day after Grant Smith had left and I had become chargé, I received a note from the protocol office at the



minister of foreign affairs saying, “His Imperial Majesty will receive you tomorrow at 10:00.” I wondered what the hell is this all about, and thought I was really in the soup now. But three or four hours later another note came from the foreign office saying the equivalent of “Oops! We made a mistake. It wasn’t you we were supposed to summon; it was somebody else.” I never actually had a one-on-one with Bokassa. Goody Cooke did, of course. I remember on one occasion, it was when Goody went to call on the emperor and basically tell him we were cutting off the aid program because of the human rights issues, Goody told me his impressions of the Emperor. This meeting was at 10:00 in the morning, and Goody had the impression that Bokassa was half drunk. We had heard that he liked to have a little tumbler of Chivas Regal instead of orange juice with his breakfast. To make sure that he got the message, and to have a written record of the demarche, we sent a diplomatic note to the Foreign Ministry repeating the message that same afternoon.

*Q: I understand that one reason why the Qadhafi effort to convert everyone to the Muslim religion didn’t hold very well was because of the desire for good scotch.*

FAIRCHILD: Yes, probably so. I know of a similar situation in Russian history regarding the non-adoption of Islam as the state religion. In the primary chronicle of Russian history dealing with the time when Russia converted to the orthodox form of Christianity, it is related that one of the religions that presented itself to the Prince of Kiev at the time was the Islamic religion. The Khazars of Central Asia also represented the Jewish faith before the Prince, and there were representatives of both the Latin church and the Eastern church. But in reviewing Islam the chronicle said its adoption would allow for some good political connections for the Russian people, but in Islam one cannot drink alcohol, and so Islam was rejected since “drinking is the great joy of the Russian people.” Well in the Central African Republic drinking was the great joy of the Central African people too. In fact one of the main problems there was drunkenness and alcoholism. Not among the few Central Africans that were Muslim, of course, but certainly among the animists and the Christians it was a real problem.

*Q: Well let’s talk a bit about Central Africa. Was it split up into tribes and did you get out and around?*

FAIRCHILD: There were lots of tribal groups in the Central African Republic. None of them dominated in terms of numbers. I think the M’Baka was the lead tribal group at the time we were there, it was certainly Bokassa’s tribe, but it probably only accounted for eight or nine percent of the population. There were lots of other small tribal groups. The lingua franca in the country was Sango, which is a language spoken all along both sides of the Ubangui River. I am told it is very close to Lingala, which is spoken in Northern Zaire, or the Congo as it is known now. We did get around, but it was difficult because there were I think only about 80 miles of paved road in the country, and that was between Bangui and M’baiki – M’baiki being where Bokassa had his home town palace. There were dirt and laterite roads in the rest of the country, and they hadn’t been maintained very well since independence so it was hard to get up country. I should also say when Goody Cooke was there, he would do a fair amount of traveling, certainly when the U.S. military attaché from Kinshasa – who was accredited to Bangui as well – came to visit with his airplane. One could travel all around the country using the aircraft. But when that happened I had to stay and watch the store. And when I was chargé it was not really possible to leave town, except

perhaps for some sort of emergency. The bottom line was that I didn't get around the country that much.

*Q: How was life there?*

FAIRCHILD: Life was actually fairly pleasant, in spite of some of the weird aspects of the Empire I was talking about earlier. It is equatorial Africa, so it is hot and humid – but not unbearably so. A large part of the year there is a lot of cloud cover, so that helps moderate the temperature. Central Africans are very gregarious, pleasant, generous people. They became even more gregarious after Bokassa fell, and they no longer had to fear reprisals from associating with foreigners. In fact when I first got there it was mostly and only officials who were free to deal with you, because they had to. It was their job. A lot of other people seemed aloof. Once you engaged them they were fine. Any food not grown locally was fairly expensive. Bangui was one of what we call a “consumables post,” meaning that you took a shipment of food with you, mostly canned food and non-perishables. But there were a couple of supermarkets where you could get products from France, including a nice selection of cheeses. The local fish *capitaine* was quite good to eat, and actually it was more expensive sometimes than fish flown in from France. While we were there, both before and after the 1979 coup, there was a normality about life there in that commercial establishments existed that did a fair if not great business, there was a banking system in place, the business community had French people at the top with the secondary level occupied by Portuguese and Greek business people. Local production included coffee, tobacco – used mainly for cigars, and other agricultural products. So, it was many steps above the kind of place depicted in Naipaul's A Bend in the River.

We were thrown on our own resources for social life, but in the diplomatic community one never wants for receptions and dinners to attend. There were some Americans who because they didn't speak French very well tended to associate only with themselves. But if you spoke French you had a wide variety of people there. The Germans had an embassy, I would say in fact even though we were very close to a number of French people, our best friends there were the German number two and his wife, Peter and Heidi Haucke. If other foreigners didn't speak good English they all spoke good French. The Russians were there up until the coup against Bokassa, and shortly after that the restored republican government of David Dacko broke relations with the Soviets and expelled them as they did the Libyans.

*Q: Ok, let's talk about the coup. You were there during the coup, yes?*

FAIRCHILD: Yes.

*Q: How did that manifest itself?*

FAIRCHILD: I was preparing to take some R&R – rest and recuperation travel – with my wife in August, but there was something in the air. One sensed from the way people talked that something was going to happen. I think a lot of people including the French had pretty much had it with Bokassa because of his human rights violations. So, given the almost palpable sense of imminent regime change, we cancelled our plans for this trip. Goody Cooke seemed happy that we did so, although he never actually asked that we cancel our R&R. One September night several hundred

French paratroopers landed at the airport, and took over the radio station and other strategic points. It was basically all over by morning. On the radio there was nothing but martial music, and at some point around 2:00 in the morning former president and restored President David Dacko got on the radio and said in effect “I am back.” The French supported him, and there were a number of Central African leading personalities both governmental and business and socially prominent people who had conspired with the French. I don’t know whether they provided the initiative, or if the French signed them up after having determined to oust Bokassa. But by the next morning they had taken over the entire city. I remember driving to the embassy that morning, and as none of our local employees had showed up I drove my official car...but I made sure the American flag was flying from the post in front of the car. As I went around this one bend to get into town, there was a French army jeep with three French paratroopers and a .50 caliber machine gun pointed at me. For a few seconds I thought to myself “I don’t know what this is all about but I sure hope it goes well.” Two of the French paratroopers, not the guy with the gun but the other two, stood up and saluted. I immediately thought, if this is a coup it’s is my kind of coup. So, after saluting back, I drove on and we started dealing with the problems in the embassy.

*Q: Did the name change immediately? Central African Republic.*

FAIRCHILD: Oh yes, immediately. Various decrees were issued of course. The French military presence stayed around for awhile. The French code name for the military operation was “Barracuda,” and in fact the major choreographer of the thing was the former French military attaché – Colonel Olympio Mazza – who came back with the paratroopers. The whole coup was done with minimal loss of life. No French were killed, and I believe only one Central African soldier was killed.

*Q: Bokassa went where?*

FAIRCHILD: Actually he was out of town on a trip visiting his friend Moammar Qadhafi in Libya. Once the coup occurred he got in his plane and flew to France asking for political asylum. This happened under the Giscard d’Estaing government. Bokassa claimed that he still had French nationality because he was a veteran of the French army. They kept him parked somewhere at Charles de Gaulle airport for about a day and a half, maybe two days while the politicians and lawyers deliberated. Finally the government said, no we are not going to give you asylum; you’ll have to go somewhere else. I think the French worked out a deal whereby President Houphouët-Boigny in the Ivory Coast gave Bokassa asylum. So he flew there and wound up staying there for about a year and a half, during which time Bokassa was planning some kind of coup with the use of mercenaries to get himself back in power. Houphouët-Boigny finally wearied of all Bokassa’s plotting and meetings with known mercenaries, and cancelled his asylum and deported him. At that point it was shortly after the French elections of 1981, so Bokassa again applied to the French for asylum – this time to the socialist government under Mitterrand, and they granted it to him. At the same time Bokassa was tried *in absentia* by the new government, found guilty of conspiring in the death of many Central Africans, and sentenced to death.

Parenthetically, some years later when I was DCM in Niamey and on my way back to post via Paris following consultations at EUCOM in Stuttgart, I had another Bokassa related encounter. That would have been in 1986, I think. Bokassa had been convinced by a number of French right

wing political types, and perhaps by other Central Africans, to go back and reclaim his throne – his earlier death sentence notwithstanding. Some of those French right wing types had persuaded him to include their organizations in his will and leave them some property he had in France, including real estate property. Long story short, he went back, was arrested immediately as he got off his plane, and his family was put on a plane and sent back to France. While at the Paris airport I saw the family arrive, and was given the whole story by a French security officer whose natural reticence was overcome when I told him I was a former American charge d'affaires in Bangui. Bokassa was again tried, again found guilty, and again sentenced to death. But they decided not to carry it out. They instead put him in prison for a couple of months, and then sent him back to his home at Berengo, near M'baiki, where he basically lived out his life – which wasn't that long, maybe a year or two – under house arrest.

*Q: Was there much during this whole time, I haven't asked sort of the pertinent question. What were American interests in the Central African Empire?*

FAIRCHILD: Very basic I think. I think the main interests were humanitarian. There were some American citizens there, mostly missionaries. But I think a lot of it was continuing to show the flag. In the early 1960's the Kennedy administration decided that we would have U.S. embassies in every newly independent African country, and so our presence in the CAE or CAR was an example of that universality principle. This principle has been renewed by every subsequent administration, despite occasional post closings.

*Q: Did we get involved in going after their vote in the UN?*

FAIRCHILD: Yes, absolutely. There were the usual pre-UN general assembly consultations, and we would try to get their vote on a number of issues. They were generally cooperative even under Bokassa, unless there was some issue directly important to the Central African Republic. Communications were not good between Bangui and their embassies in New York and Washington. Sometimes this was only because their embassies in New York and Washington weren't able to pay their telex or telephone bills on time. They simply sometimes had their phone or telex simply cut off. So we always made sure to remind the Department that it needed to discuss the issue at hand with the actual CAR ambassador on the spot because sometimes the instructions from Bangui would simply not be received. Once, after the coup, I was calling on a high government official who became a very good friend and still is, Jean-Pierre Lebouder, who in spite of his name is Central African. His father was French, and his mother Central African. He was then the Minister of Planning and the principal contact for us with the Dacko government, the same job he held under Bokassa. Subsequently he actually became Prime Minister, but that was only for about six months. Anyway, I was talking to him about a vote we were trying to get the Central Africans to cast. It had to do with **not** inviting the Palestine Liberation Organization to attend the upcoming World Bank/IMF meetings as an official observer. We were making a major effort worldwide to get countries to vote against inviting the PLO, so I called on Jean-Pierre to secure CAR support. He said, "Well this is a political decision. As you know the Central African Republic, even when it was an empire, is in favor of Palestinian rights. Given the political nature of this issue, you will have to see the President about that." Well I couldn't get to the President in the short time available. I did see his French advisor, an advisor the French provided after the coup. His name was Jacques Serre, someone who had been a former colonial administrator there

back in the old days. So I basically made my case to him, saying “The U.S. government is most anxious to get this request to the President.” He said, “I will make sure he gets it.” Despite Serre’s assurance, I was uncertain how well that would go. So, knowing the Gabonese were providing lots of money to help Dacko get his government re-established, I suggested the Department approach President Bongo of Gabon who was usually in favor of whatever the U.S. position was on major issues, to use him to press the Central Africans. Apparently he did just that, because in the final vote the CAR voted with the United States. So, yes, getting the CAR to support us in UN and other international organization votes was obviously one of the main interests we had there.

*Q: Did we have Peace Corps there?*

FAIRCHILD: We did, and a fairly substantial presence given the size of the country. I think there were about 80 volunteers when I was there, and they were all over the place. They were involved primarily in health work, also in fisheries and well digging. We got an injection of extra volunteers after the periodic series of dustups in the ongoing civil war in Chad. A lot of the volunteers in Chad came down and were attached to the Central African program. They were mostly very good people, the Peace Corps volunteers. We had a number of friends among those stationed in Bangui, but also got to meet those from upcountry when they would come to town periodically.

*Q: One of the things that has surfaced from time to time with the problems of female volunteers, unwanted advances etc. Did you have any problems of that nature?*

FAIRCHILD: My first reaction is to say no, absolutely not. But I don’t know that for sure; there may have been one or two incidents of that type. Had there been a problem of major proportions I’m sure that the Peace Corps director would have talked to the Ambassador or me about it. The first director in fact was a single woman, Karen Woodbury. She was very sensitive to this kind of thing, but never mentioned anything about such a problem either to Goody or to me. For the second half of my time there, the Peace Corps directors were a married couple who shared the job and shared the salary. We had a very good close relationship with them, Les Long and Lynn Lederer. I don’t ever remember their mentioning it either. Most of the problems we had with the volunteers were health related. A volunteer up country just had to go swimming because it was so hot and humid, so he would swim in a pond that invariably was infested with bilharzia, also known as schistosomiasis. Getting rid of the infectious parasite that transmits that disease involved serious medical treatment, even medical evacuation in some cases.

*Q: OK, this is probably a good place to stop. Is there anything else we should cover, take a quick look through your notes.*

FAIRCHILD: Just one thing. We had some pretty serious civil disorders in December, 1979, after the coup, and again in early 1980. We were quite concerned about the ability of the Central Africans to control the situation. I think it was because a lot of government mechanisms, primitive though they were, had broken down and people were unhappy. This foreshadowed some of the military mutinies they had later in the 1980s and 1990s because people just weren’t getting paid. During these disorders we maintained very close contact with the French. In fact I lent one of our radio sets to my French counterpart, Martial Laurens. We would check in with each other several times a day. We knew that some of the CAR army units would occasionally encounter large

numbers of hostile demonstrators, and we were worried that violent encounters between the two might lead to more serious civil disorders. I also made sure that I renewed the informal unwritten agreement with the French Embassy that if the balloon really went up, and things just came to pieces there with lots of attendant violence, that Americans would be considered honorary Frenchmen for purposes of evacuation. It was clear that the French would have planes and troops in faster than we could ever manage such a thing. The French were quite insistent, however, that they were not going to use their troops in country to put down civil disorders unless it became an extreme, life or death situation. When I took the radio over to the French Embassy, Martial said, "We should have call signals. You shouldn't be using your name. I know what you Americans call us, so why don't you refer to me as *Grenouille* (Frog)." I said, "OK, and you can call me by the code name Cowboy." He laughed and said, "That's very clever, nobody is ever going to figure out who is talking to whom!" I said, "Martial, I really don't mind if the people who are listening know that the French and the Americans embassies are talking to each other." Anyway that is how we addressed that potential problem that fortunately never materialized.

*Q: OK, I will just put at the end here so we will know where to pick it up, we are talking about 1980 is it?*

FAIRCHILD: When we left it was the summer of 1981. I was headed back to Washington to take the deputy job in the office of Inter-African Affairs. It was what is now known as the Office of Regional Affairs office in the Africa Bureau. My boss there was Larry Williamson.

*Q: OK. Today is 21 February 2012 with Al Fairchild. You went to Washington in 1981 was it?*

FAIRCHILD: Yes, as Deputy Director of the Office of Regional Affairs in the Africa Bureau. I had hoped actually to go to Paris for that Africa and NEA watcher job, but the front office of the Africa Bureau had already promised to support someone else, the officer who was in charge of the AF Assignments Division in Personnel, and he had been assigned to that position. It was the only time I was sorely disappointed in not getting a particular job.

*Q: That is one of those connected jobs.*

FAIRCHILD: I think so. I thought in fact that my credentials were better for that Paris job than that person who got it, but that was just in terms of language qualification and having experience in NEA, namely in Afghanistan and Iran. It would have been a fascinating time for me to serve in Paris because the socialists had just won the French elections, and Francois Mitterrand was the new President of France.

*Q: You were in the AF Bureau in Washington from when to when?*

FAIRCHILD: Well, starting in the summer of 1981 through the summer of 1983. The head of the office was Larry Williamson, who subsequently went off after that job to work in aviation negotiations and later to be U.S. Ambassador to Gabon. This was actually a pretty exciting time to be in Washington in this kind of job, so it helped assuage my bruised feelings about not getting Paris. This was the time of the policy known as "Constructive Engagement" in Africa, meaning constructive engagement mainly in Southern Africa with the Republic of South Africa and other

regional states – especially Angola and what eventually became Namibia,. Chet Crocker was the assistant secretary who led this policy, and he had the full support of the Reagan administration that was also brand new. Frank Wisner became Chet’s principal deputy, replacing Lannon Walker, and we in the Regional Affairs Office worked a lot with Frank. Another of our principal work relationships was with Jim Bishop, who was another deputy assistant secretary in AF. Rounding out the front office was Princeton Lyman, who dealt with resource issues, including development and security assistance. Princeton, by the way, was not only close to brilliant and an incredibly skilled bureaucrat but is one of the few people I know with an almost photographic memory. He could handle hours of testimony on the Hill with only casual reference to his notes – just amazing.

*Q: When you got there how was constructive engagement explained to you?*

FAIRCHILD: I was initially rather dubious coming from six straight years in the field, in Iran and then in Central Africa. But basically I think the idea was to convince the South Africans that they had a vital interest in coming to some sort of arrangements with their neighbors. I also think the subtext of that message was that they were not going to find another administration in Washington more friendly toward South Africa than the Reagan administration. So it was probably a “now or never” situation for South Africa to cut some kind of deal. Also while we were probably not aware of it, I think the fissures in the edifice of the Communist empire were starting to appear. Ultimately I think this contributed mightily toward the success of this kind of policy in Southern Africa. I don’t mean to suggest that Chet Crocker or the Reagan administration ignored the rest of Africa, but the rest of Africa was clearly the main area of focus in the Regional Affairs Office. Larry and I were ably assisted by Greg Bradford, who was our political/military advisor. He was an active duty air force lieutenant colonel at the time, although when he retired from the military he basically stayed on at the same job. We would periodically get together with Chet, and Frank, and others in the Bureau for policy brainstorming, although those sessions never concerned Southern Africa. That was Chet’s baby, and that of the office of Southern African Affairs. But we talked frequently about Chad, Libya, and other issues.

*Q: I have interviewed Chet Crocker and he mentions during this period one of his big concerns was the role of the CIA. William Casey, the head of the CIA, was in Crocker’s mind far too cozy with the White South African intelligence services.*

FAIRCHILD: The so called BOSS organization, the Bureau of State Security.

*Q: Yes, and Crocker had developed his own brand of espionage-oriented Foreign Service Officers who were trying to figure out what the CIA was doing down there. Did you run into that?*

FAIRCHILD: A little bit, yes. I think Casey did a lot of freelancing too, and not just in Africa.

*Q: This is just it.*

FAIRCHILD: Casey had his own set of friends on Capitol Hill and at the White House, but he was known to be basically his own boss. I think a lot of things that happened in the Angola situation were the result of CIA supporting Savimbi and his people after they determined that Holden Roberto had little chance of becoming the leader of Angola. There was of course an ethnic

component to all of that, but I think life would have been easier for Chet had Casey not been that kind of freelancer. There is sort of a long history of things like this going on. I remember back when I was a desk officer for Senegal, Gambia, and Mali, David Newsom was Assistant Secretary for Africa and pursuing a certain policy which of course had been blessed by the White House. But he was regularly undercut behind the scenes by Vice President Spiro Agnew, who was very friendly with the South African Embassy and the South African regime itself. So there is a long history of important people going beyond their brief on that set of issues.

*Q: What were some of the regional connections that you were particularly involved with?*

FAIRCHILD: In that job I had several responsibilities. Some of them had to do with working the Hill, congressional relations. Also I was the person in charge of what for lack of a better word I would call third country consultations. I attended the so-called "Africa Experts" meetings held at NATO headquarters in Brussels, at which we compared notes with our NATO allies. I was also required to maintain regular contact with the Africa person in a number of embassies in Washington: the French Embassy, British Embassy, German Embassy, Japanese Embassy, and the Egyptian Embassy. The Egyptians of course were very active players in African politics. Their ambassador at the time was Ashraf Ghorbal, who was a person of great influence in Egypt and in Washington for that matter. He was ambassador from 1973 to 1984. So I would be present as a note taker when Chet would meet with people like Ashraf Ghorbal, or somebody of note coming from France, Germany, or the UK. On Hill matters I helped prepare talking points for people who would go up and meet with Senate or House committees. I recall one of the worst moments of my life occurred in a hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. I was attending along with several people from the Department, and I was probably the low person on the totem pole there. But as it got closer to 12:00 noon people started peeling off and leaving. Larry Williamson, my boss, said, "I'm going back. If they have any questions you can handle it, right?" I said, "I suppose so. We'll find out." Almost immediately after he left, Senator Chris Dodd of Connecticut said, "Before we adjourn Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask a question of anybody here from the administration about our aid program in Zaire." Of course Dodd was known to be a great opponent of President Mobutu, and I thought I was going to be the one to get up there and defend every element of our assistance program to Zaire – a very uncomfortable task under the circumstances. At that point, the Committee Chairman Senator Percy said, "We have got to meet this Kuwaiti delegation for lunch, so we will have to do that another time." Dodd was very pushy, not that he is ever embarrassed to be so, and he said, "No, no, I really want to ask these questions Mr. Chairman. Is anybody here from the administration?" I started to raise my hand feebly, but at that point Percy rescued me and said, "No, I said, we have this luncheon appointment with the Kuwaitis. This session is adjourned," and hit his gavel. I was suddenly relieved of any responsibility of trying to defend Mobutu in front of this august body. I knew what to say, of course, but it wasn't an easy thing to do.

*Q: Looking at Africa at the time let's take a few areas. What about the horn of Africa? How stood things at that time?*

FAIRCHILD: Well it was pretty much a mess. This was the time that Siad Barre decided to switch patrons from the Soviets to the Americans. He was not exactly what I would call a reliable partner. The usual tensions with Ethiopia continued and seemed to get worse. Maybe I can just do a little



swing back toward the West. One of our big concerns at the time was Libya of course, under the less than enlightened rule of Muammar Qadhafi, of not so blessed memory now that he is gone. He was involved in lots of things in Africa, and had spies all over the continent bribing people. Libya was creating mischief in lots of parts of West Africa, making contacts with the Tuaregs who in later days – especially right now – have become a major security concern in West Africa. Qadhafi had a dubious claim to a northern slice of Chad, the famous Aouzou Strip. His legal claim to that was a treaty concluded at some point between Vichy France, in the person of its Foreign Minister Pierre Laval, and Count Galeazzo Ciano, who was Mussolini's Foreign Minister and son-in-law. The notion was to benefit the Italians who were then occupying Libya. The Vichy French ceded this northern slice of Chad, which was a French colony at the time, and Qadhafi relied on treaty to justify his claim. It is a pretty barren piece of land, with no mineral deposits as far as I know. This treaty was never ratified by either the French or the Italian parliaments, so it was pretty much a non-starter. So, the Aouzou Strip issue was something that made people concerned in Washington and in France. In Central Africa I don't think there were major problems, except there was of course the Congo situation. Mobutu had been our man in the Congo for a long time, or more accurately the CIA's man in the Congo. He was kept in power by us, but I think it was mainly at the Agency's initiative. And Mobutu found regular ways to be helpful to both American and French interests in the region, so there was no serious interest in opposing him at that time in either Washington or Paris. There were the problems with Angola, and one of the things that discomfited the administration was the presence of a large number of Cuban soldiers and doctors helping out the Angolan Marxists in their fight for independence. There were three main resistance movements in Angola: the Marxist MPLA, Savimbi's UNITA group who were mainly from the Ovimbundu tribe, and the smaller FNLA group led by Holden Roberto. The Cubans wanted to help the group that was in power, the MPLA. These were Cubans who were allegedly performing their "international duty," but they were basically being lent to the Angolans by the Castro regime.

*Q: Did we see any profit in any dealings with Qadhafi at the time?*

FAIRCHILD: None whatsoever. I think I can say that pretty categorically. Qadhafi was pretty much beyond the pale as far as everyone was concerned in Washington and the rest of the Western capitals at that time. Certainly there were times when he was more friendly with the Italians who relied mightily on Libya for oil. But in general he was pretty much a pariah then. I remember one of my duties in the office was to attend a regular meeting chaired by the Director of the Bureau of Political/Military Affairs. This was an inter-agency session, and its basic task was to decide when and where we would stick the American thumb in Qadhafi's eye just to remind him of certain principles, for example freedom of the seas. Qadhafi had this claim to a huge area off the Libyan coast, which included the Gulf of Sidra. My principal task at these meetings, as described to me by AF deputy assistant secretary Jim Bishop, was to remind people – especially those from the Pentagon – that before they did something like any kind of strike against any African territory they need to take into account the safety of our embassy people in the region. So, we wanted to be informed before such activities so that we could warn our embassies in the region to batten down the hatches and be prepared for demonstrations and maybe more than that.

*Q: Were you involved, again I can't remember the exact time of these things, but Mogadishu, Freetown and the capital of Liberia, Monrovia. I mean we were always evacuating those places. Did you get involved?*

FAIRCHILD: I think this was slightly before that Liberia went up in flames.

*Q: Charles Taylor was active then?*

FAIRCHILD: I think that was later too. I think Tolbert may still have been in charge at the time. There still hadn't been the military coup that ended up as you recall with practically the whole government being marched down to the beach and machine gunned. That was a coup led by Samuel K. Doe. I guess that did happen toward the end of my tour in AF. Doe of course was then overthrown by other people. As I recall they made sure that it took him a long time to die, and it was a very unpleasant situation – recorded on film by the coup plotters.

One of the things I got involved in and I enjoyed tremendously was working on high level visits in both directions. Foreign officials coming to Washington to talk about African affairs, and American officials going out. For example, our ambassador to the UN at the time Jeanne Kirkpatrick decided with about one week's notice that she wanted to make a grand tour of Africa. It befell my office to work it out, and I was supposed to put the thing together. We actually had a very good tour lined up for her. She went, and I think had successful meetings in every country visited. The message she had to deliver was quite tough, however. The Reagan administration wanted to see African states that received any significant U.S. aid vote with us more rigorously in the UN. Her message was essentially "if you don't vote with us you are not going to get any aid from the U.S. nor any support when your candidates come up for jobs with international organizations." So we put this trip together and had a briefing on the trip for her before she left. At about this same time my wife's cousin and his wife came for a visit from California, and I decided to take them to lunch on the 8<sup>th</sup> Floor of the Department along with my wife. This is the so called diplomatic reception area, but there was a very nice restaurant there...there still is today This was before the renovation, and although its mostly mahogany and stainless steel décor didn't look as nice as it does now the food was a lot better at that time. So we were sitting there having our lunch, I think they were serving Chicken Kiev and luncheon steaks, and into the dining room come Jeanne Kirkpatrick and Ken Adelman, who was then Reagan's head of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. As she drew near our table and caught my eye, I stood up and said, "Madam Ambassador, how are you?" She said, "Oh, Mr. Fairchild. Thanks again for that wonderful briefing yesterday." Then Adelman, who didn't know me from Adam, figured that if Jeanne Kirkpatrick knew me then I must be a worthwhile person so he said a warm hello and pumped my hand vigorously. They got to their table and sat down, and of course my wife's cousin and his wife were enormously impressed that I knew these certifiably big shots. I just happened to have done the briefing for her the day before, so it was a lot of fun. I guess I was also tapped for this job because of my past assignments in Francophone Africa and also because I spoke French rather well – 4+ on FSI's scale of 0 to 5 to be precise. We had a number of high level visitors from France who wanted to talk about Africa, as well as the Germans and the Brits. I don't think the Dutch ever came to Washington for bilaterals with us, but rather like the Japanese handled things locally. The French sent their Africa people to consult with us, certainly every new head of the Africa Office in the Elysee Palace came to town. We would usually have meetings at the Department, and then there would be a lunch for the dignitary and whatever entourage he had at either the Metropolitan Club, which is where Frank Wisner was a member, or the Cosmos Club, which was Chet Crocker's club.

I should mention that in the France of that day, and I believe it is still the same, there was a special Africa office within the French President's offices in the Elysee Palace. This is an office that was originally set up by Charles de Gaulle under his former colleague in the Resistance, Jacques Foccart. The Foccart network as it was called had close connections with all the power structures in French speaking Africa. The Foccart network persisted even after Foccart left the scene, and there were new people taking it over but maintaining the tight link the President's office. One of Mitterrand's Africa Office directors was Jean Pierre Cot, who had a very interesting history. He knew Africa cold, and obviously was very influential in the French Socialist Party and its government. Cot spoke elegant and flawless American English, and I say American specifically because he had spent the World War II years here in Washington as a child. He had come this time to get to know the American Africa team, and part of his program here was a meeting with the Deputy Secretary, Judge William Clarke at the time. I was stunned at how poorly Clarke performed at this meeting, and assumed that he had not read the briefing memo – which was brilliant since I had written it – or had other things on his mind. He just didn't seem to engage with Cot, and as the meeting progressed – it lasted about 45 minutes, maybe longer – it ended up being more of an exchange between Chet Crocker and Jean Pierre Cot rather than engaging the Deputy Secretary who sat there as an inert presence. But, at least from a protocol perspective, it was useful for this man to be received by the Deputy Secretary of State even though they didn't communicate very much. We had another visitor later after Cot left office, just before I had moved on to my next assignment, the new head of the Elysee's Africa Office, Guy Penne. We did the usual drill, although there was no meeting with the Deputy Secretary. As far as the exchange of views went, this particular visit involved a meeting that went on for about two hours in Chet Crocker's office. It was basically a region by region review, wherein our regional office directors – West, Central, East and Southern Africa – presented our perspectives and asked the French for theirs. The meetings with Guy Penne were very successful, as I recall.

*Q: Did Mitterrand's son get involved while you were there?*

FAIRCHILD: No, he arrived on the scene later. That was Christophe Mitterrand, and he was known as “*Monsieur Papa m'a dit*” among the Africans because his father was Francois Mitterrand. When he took over at the office of African affairs he was obviously very well connected, probably better connected than the others had been. The Africans always used to joke that he would always start his conversations with “Daddy told me that...”

*Q: Were you ever able to establish a kind of rapport between the French observer and Chet Crocker? Or was it always sort of distant.*

FAIRCHILD: I think it was more distant than close. I think part of it was of course the nature of the politics involved. All of these French government officials being good Socialists were on the left side things, not something to endear one to Reagan administration officials.

*Q: Ahh, and Crocker being a child of the Reagan administration.*

FAIRCHILD: That is right. Although in some cases you could make a case that Mitterrand defended the interests of the West in Africa better than his predecessor Giscard d'Estaing.

Certainly in terms of the Chad-Libyan connection the Mitterrand policy was better than Giscard d'Estaing, meaning more aggressive toward Libya.

*Q: What about the horn of Africa. Here you had Somalia and Ethiopia as one of these reciprocal problems, meaning if you are on the side of Somalia you are opposed to Ethiopia and vice versa. Where stood we at that time and how did we calculate it?*

FAIRCHILD: Well I think the problem at that time with Ethiopia was that Haile Selassie was of course no longer there. There was this junta that had taken over. They called it the "Derg," and they were committed Marxist thugs and had done away with the Emperor and large numbers of his regime. The head of the Derg was Haile Mengistu Mariam, which I think means something like "the power of the Virgin Mary."

*Q: Haile Selassie means power of the trinity.*

FAIRCHILD: That's right. Haile Mengistu Mariam was a pretty nasty character. For example, I remember hearing this just before I got back to Washington, he rounded up a large number of students who opposed his regime and had several hundreds of them executed in a public stadium in Addis Ababa. Then he had the uniquely bad taste to send a bill to the families of those who were executed for the cost of the bullets expended in the execution of their children.

*Q: He also had a cabinet meeting in which most of the members of the cabinet were killed.*

FAIRCHILD: I'm unsure about that, but he was definitely not a nice guy. He is still alive by the way. He has been granted asylum in Zimbabwe by his good friend Robert Mugabe, whose fall I will relish when it happens.

*Q: How did we treat Mobutu in this Crocker period?*

FAIRCHILD: I think it is fair to say he was known for what he was, which is something I guess similar to what Roosevelt or Truman supposedly said about Anastasio Somoza. "He may be a bastard, but he is our bastard." I think that was probably the attitude in Washington during Crocker's time, but also before and after....at least for a while. Occasionally Mobutu would do things that showed he regarded the American connection well. For example, it was typical of the Mobutu family – and the Congo was a family operation – to have an annual conference where they would talk about policies to be followed for the coming year. Well one year, it was one of the years I was in this job, Mobutu and his family decided to have the annual conference at Disney World in Florida. I know this sounds weird, but they did exactly that; they all got a private floor in a hotel in Orlando and had their family session there. He was not a nice character, but he was ours, and if not loyal at least did a lot of the right things internationally. He was also very helpful in trying to resolve regional conflicts too. But we were frequently required to head off anti-Mobutu efforts by members of the U.S. Congress. At one point I recall the AF front office hoped to use the occasion of a visit of Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin to have him say a good word about Mobutu to anti-Mobutu Congressmen like Steve Solarz and Howard Wolpe. The conduit for this request was AIPAC, the American Israel Public Affairs Council and main pillar of the Israel lobby in the United States. The approach was made, and – to his credit – Begin refused to do so, at least

so I was informed by one of the Deputy Assistant Secretaries. And this was despite the fact that Israel had reasonably good relations with the Mobutu regime and had Israeli soldiers training and providing officers for his bodyguard.

This episode with the approach to AIPAC on the Begin visit reminds me of another Africa related event involving the Israel Lobby and its influence. At one late afternoon session among several colleagues in the Africa Bureau, someone said he'd heard we were supposed to encourage African countries that had no diplomatic relations with Israel to accept Israeli aid projects, no matter how small, as a preliminary step to establishing relations at some point. I made the observation that I didn't see how that worked either to the benefit of the African countries in question, especially if they had otherwise valuable relations with Arab countries, or to our own national interests -- except perhaps with regard to our bilateral relations with Israel. The very next day I had a call followed by a visit from Howard Teicher of the NSC staff to let me know that there was a classified protocol to a recent agreement with Israel that we would do exactly that, and that my comments were decidedly not with the program. I politely responded that I'd never been informed of such an agreement or related responsibility on our part, and that unless I received explicit instructions to that end from my superiors at State I was not prepared to do what he suggested. While I'm sure that my response was reported through some channel to my superiors, just as my earlier comments had been reported to Teicher himself, nobody at State ever confirmed this "policy" to me either verbally or in written form. Howard Teicher, of course, is someone whose role in the foreign affairs establishment is worth a Google search for readers of these memoirs.

*Q: When you look at it, Mobutu is equated with people like Mengistu, and Sekou Toure, and others – but he really didn't have as much blood on his hands. He put people in jail and then made them ambassadors. I mean he kept sort of a revolving door. He knew how to play the political and tribal game without too much bloodshed.*

FAIRCHILD: Because of our experience in Bangui, I could say this he was sort of a larger version of Bokassa. He had more to work with too, bigger country, more wealth, probably similar tribal dynamics I would think. But you are right. He didn't have nearly as much blood on his hands as Sekou Toure did. Or certainly people like Mengistu in Ethiopia. He was more inclined to use money or jail terms to exert his influence over his country rather than executions.

*Q: Did you have much contact with the British side of things, because Crocker was certainly working with the British on all of it.*

FAIRCHILD: Personally no, and I don't think our office did that much either because a lot of the stuff was done in London. As in Paris, we have had for a long time an Africa watcher in the political section in London. At that time I think it was either Gib Lanpher or Bob Frazier; I forget which. They were involved in all kinds of meetings primarily on Southern African issues, and I still refer to Gib Lanpher as the midwife in the birth of Zimbabwe because of his work with the Brits in London. But our office tended not to get involved all that much with the Brits. There was an Africa Watcher contact at the British embassy. I personally did not work with that man very much, but my boss Larry Williamson did. Probably because Larry had been stationed in London and had fond memories of that assignment. Chris Crabbe was his name of our contact in the British

Embassy, and if I recall correctly he came from the family that owned the Famous Grouse whisky company.

*Q: What about the South African regime and the BOSS and the security set up. Did you have any contact with them? Did you have much to do with them.*

FAIRCHILD: No, the South African connection was pretty much held tightly by Chet himself. Chet also had a special advisor who maintained informal contacts with elements of the South African government, and who previously had worked for United Goldfields. His name was Robert Cabelly. In later years Robert set up a consulting firm and had a number of African governments, including some unsavory ones, as clients.

*Q: What was your impression of working with Chet Crocker?*

FAIRCHILD: I came to regard Chet as either brilliant or at least very close to it. I think he was committed to solving a number of ongoing festering conflicts in Southern Africa. That was clearly the main focus of his work. I think for what it was worth he was very sincere and realized that unless one engaged the South Africans in the solution to problems in the Southern African region it wasn't going to go anywhere. They were perfectly prepared to be hard headed and dig in their heels. He had to work on them to get them committed and involved, their commitment to being involved in a larger peace process. I don't know if he had a precise strategic vision of what he wanted Southern Africa to look like, but I think he certainly had a strategic vision of the kinds of processes he thought should be put in place so that eventually one could work toward a peaceful solution to some of these problems. I do not think it is going too far to say that his efforts led to a situation that ultimately facilitated the 1994 transition to majority rule government in South Africa.

*Q: As I see it this is from a distance he was in a very difficult position because you had a Republican administration with people who are taking a very hard nosed look at Africa, and he was getting a lot of heat. This constructive engagement seemed to people on the liberal side to be a sell out to the South Africans, but to the people on the right side it seemed like he was being nasty to the Afrikaners. That sort of range of opinion was reflected in the Foreign Service too.*

FAIRCHILD: I think your analysis is spot on on all of those issues. I think Chet probably had to look over his right shoulder more than his left. He knew that the left side, the liberal side had mostly negative things to say, but he was always very careful to protect his right flank because there were a lot of people who didn't like any kind of engagement with African Marxists, like the Angolans. I find it totally obvious that as you can't have a Southern African solution without the South Africans you also need other Southern Africans – like the Angolans and Mozambicans and Namibians – involved too. I think in the Foreign Service there were people who liked the policy and supported it, and those who disliked it and thought it was going to lead nowhere. It would just help reinforce South African intransigence. I think I may have started off that way, but I finally came to support the policy. It was the only way to go, in a pragmatic sense, and I was unwilling to assume negative ulterior motives on the part of Chet and his associates. The main reason it succeeded after a certain point in time was in my view due to two things. First, internal dynamics in South Africa, having someone relatively reasonable nature like de Klerk come to power, and someone who saw a solution that would involve the liberation of Nelson Mandela. Mandela did

lots of things after he came out of Robben Island that in another time would have qualified him for sainthood. Also the slow but steady collapse of the Soviet Union left a lot of the less than friendly folks in the region without their patron. I am thinking here of the MPLA in Angola and SWAPO – the Southwest Africa People’s Organization – in what has now become Namibia. Even in Mozambique, the FRELIMO had to contend with losing its international patron and with a successful and frequently terroristic war waged against it by South Africa.

One thing I would like to mention before we move on to another subject was a trip that then Vice President George H.W. Bush made to Africa in 1982. We had worked up a trip for him that involved six to seven stops starting in Dakar. This was a trip that had to be interrupted halfway through because Leonid Brezhnev, the head of the Soviet Union, had died. Vice President Bush was designated as our representative to the funeral so he had a detour up to Moscow, and then come back to Africa to continue his trip. This was mainly a “press the flesh trip,” an occasion to raise a few United Nations issues, and also like a lot of these trips to demonstrate ongoing U.S. interest in Africa and its problems. We had two briefing sessions for Vice President Bush: four hours one day, and then another four hours the day after that. We went to his office, not in the West Wing but his office in the Old Executive Office building. He was very hospitable, and personally offered coffee and soft drinks, Mountain Dew’s, at 9:00 in the morning (which I thought was a bit strange). I took coffee instead. I found him to be much more impressive up close than I thought he was on television, more than his public persona would have suggested. He spoke mostly in complete sentences, not the way he appeared to be in the media. He had clearly read his brief and asked very good pointed questions. I was just the choreographer for these sessions; the principal briefer was Frank Wisner, Chet Crocker’s principal deputy. We had prepared certain useful things for the Vice President, for example a list of people he was likely to meet on his trip whom he had met earlier in his incarnations as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations or when he was head of the CIA. We also had brief talking points that he might use with these people. He requested at one point a list of people he should ask about, maybe those who have recently died or gone on to other things. Sort of a nice touch or grace note. Then he said he also asked a list of people whom he should not ask about because they might be in prison for treason or something like that. So he really wanted to be very well scripted for this trip. We produced what he asked for, and the whole trip was quite successful – if only as a public relations exercise.

*Q: Well no, he was probably next to Adams II was as well versed in diplomatic procedure as any president.*

FAIRCHILD: Just before I came here today Stu I was watching a program on television – a Charlie Rose program with five presidential historians, Michael Beschloss, Doris Kearns Goodwin, Robert Caro, and....

*Q: Smith?*

FAIRCHILD: No. I am trying to think who else. Oh, John Meacham. He had a book published recently about Andrew Jackson. They were talking about underestimated one term presidents. They pretty much agreed that George Herbert Walker Bush is starting to come into his own and be appreciated much more than when he was in office, much as Harry Truman has come back into his own in the past 20 years.

*Q: Did you find working in the advocate role particularly in constructive engagement that your Foreign Service colleagues that you would meet in the cafeteria or the corridors were kind of wondering what the hell is this all about?*

FAIRCHILD: Yes, to the extent that they cared about Africa. I think most people were pretty much up to their eyeballs in whatever they were working on. They were interested obviously in the personality relationships and how the policy seemed to be working out or not working out. I know I had a couple of friends, one of them was on the Hill detailed to one of the Africa subcommittees. They always had hostile questions about what was going on. Their mindset was that this was definitely either wrong or evil, or just wrong headed, and was likely to go nowhere.

*Q: One of the Congressional people whom I have interviewed had several long sessions on Africa. His name escapes me now, from Brooklyn, head of an African committee.*

FAIRCHILD: Solarz, Stephen Solarz?

*Q: Stephen Solarz. Did you run across him at all?*

FAIRCHILD: Oh yes, and Howard Wolpe as well. They were I would say probably the principal opponents of this policy on the Hill. I know that Chet maintained close contact with them, but it was characterized by how you maintain contact with actual or potential adversaries. I don't think there was a lot of common ground.

*Q: What was the opposition. Why was there opposition to what Crocker was doing?*

FAIRCHILD: I think it was basically philosophical. I think the Democrats believed that the South African Afrikaner regime was incapable of evolution. That it was hopelessly antagonistic towards doing anything to improve the lot of black people in their own society, and the right wing people were opposed to any neighboring state that was ideologically aligned with the left or had a patronage relationship with the Soviet Union or a close relationship with Cuba. I believe it was just basically as simple as that. I also think that those on the left side of U.S. politics saw constructive engagement as simply pandering to South Africa, and thus believed that the administration was going to make matters worse than it would be if they simply found ways of being regularly and resolutely hostile to the Afrikaner regime.

*Q: Did you get any feel for the position of Ronald Reagan on this whole thing, or was it that he had no particular problem with how we were doing things.*

FAIRCHILD: I don't really have a good feel for that. I know that Chet acted with such confidence that he had the full support of the President, and I know he met with him if not frequently at least often enough so that confidence seemed to be justified. I remember getting some criticism from a former Foreign Service Officer who was on the Senate staff at the time and whose views were considerably to the right of what most FSOs had at the time. He didn't think that the assistant secretary was following the administration policy; this former FSO was at that time working for Senator Helms. I just stopped him cold and said, "Chet Crocker knows what he is doing. He is the



one whom the President has designated as the senior U.S. official in Africa policy, so I don't think I don't see any difference between what he is doing and what you think the administration's policy is or should be." I may even have added something snarky about the President having a better idea what U.S. policy should be than the senior senator from North Carolina. But to answer your question straight, I don't have a good feel for the quality of their personal relationship. Certainly he had the president's support.

*Q: Was the secretary of State George Shultz much of a figure in this, or was he engaged elsewhere.*

FAIRCHILD: I had the impression that Secretary Shultz was more involved with other issues – China, Europe, the Soviet Union, and the Western Hemisphere – and that he pretty much left Africa in Chet's hands. I am quite sure, however, that Chet met often with the Secretary on African issues, especially as they involved the Southern African set of problems.

*Q: Crocker had his staff. Would you consider yourself part of it or were you counted as a separate organization.*

FAIRCHILD: In the larger sense I was obviously part of his staff, but there was a small coterie of people who worked just on Southern Africa issues. They met regularly with him – these were people who were in the Office of Southern African Affairs, plus people like this special advisor Robert Cabelly. They would meet separately. Obviously everybody met together for the weekly staff meetings, but they often were more "show and tell" meetings rather than policy deliberations.

*Q: Was there much going on in sort of the Francophone west Africa?*

FAIRCHILD: Well, certainly Francophone West Africa could have competed at this time for the "coup of the month" award had there been such a thing. Sometimes they seemed to happen for reasons that were not related at all to the larger Cold War competition. We were obviously concerned about Libyan and Soviet influence in West Africa, but I think it definitely played second fiddle to the Southern African set of issues at that time. I was, because of my previous assignments, very interested in that area. In fact I wanted to go back at some point to one of those countries. It ended up being Niger, but that is a couple of years later. My assignment was coming toward an end in 1983, and it didn't seem to make sense to uproot the family and go back overseas. Our kids were in college at the time, and our son and daughter were each having some issues so we thought it would be best if Mama and Papa stayed nearby. So that is what we ended up doing, and I went for a job that I suppose was a natural continuation after this African job. I became the head of the Africa assignments division within the Bureau of Personnel, a career development and assignments office for the Foreign Service. In that capacity I was head of the office that handled all of the assignments for the Africa Bureau in Washington and overseas, plus a number of other bureaus like INR, the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, and the Bureau of Administration, which in those days contained the office of security – what we now call Diplomatic Security.

*Q: Well this in a way you have probably the greatest range of assignments in an awful lot of countries. An awful lot of countries that people in the normal course of events people wouldn't want to go to.*

FAIRCHILD: Yes. That is quite right.

*Q: What were your experiences?*

FAIRCHILD: Maybe I should start with a quick review of the personnel policy perspective. As you know the Foreign Service had and still has what is called the "open assignments system." Open assignments doesn't mean you get what you want, although it is essentially driven by the individual's expression of interest in specific assignments. Open means that the people whose bureaus have the jobs that you bid on can see that you are interested in them and can evaluate you relative to other candidates. You are free to lobby for these jobs to the extent that you can, discreetly of course and without breaking any crockery. You are free to make your case as to why you would be good for those particular jobs. There were other policies being debated or being put in place at that time that were designed to see that people got assigned to some of these less pleasant places. One is the "fair share policy," meaning that all officers are expected to do some duty in hardship posts. It was codified in a certain way so that you couldn't be available only for jobs in Europe; you had to do the Third World too. The way the process worked is that you bid on the jobs you're interested in, and then lists are produced so one can see all the candidates for each job. Then assignment division people like me would discuss the candidates with the bureaus that have the jobs to determine whom they prefer. Simultaneously I would talk to the counselors for the employees bidding on the jobs and see what their strengths and weaknesses were. That way I could advise the bureaus, in my case the Africa Bureau or the others I mentioned, about the strengths and weaknesses of the people involved. I soon discovered to my horror when the lists were run off shortly after I arrived there that fully half of all of my jobs were underbid, and of those about half had no bidders at all. I am talking principally about administrative officer jobs – especially administrative specialist jobs like General Services Officer, Budget and Fiscal Officer, Personnel Officer – and to a lesser extent economic and political officer jobs. Not for DCM jobs, however, because people always want to be DCM, Deputy Chief of Mission – the number two in the embassy.

*Q: Of course being a DCM is almost a prerequisite to be an ambassador, or to move up into senior ranks. Even if it meant being DCM of a four-person embassy or the equivalent, it still counted as a DCM job.*

FAIRCHILD: The head of the Office of Career Development and Assignments at that time was Art Tienken, Ambassador Arthur Tienken. I remember coming back to the office one day; I had been out a good part of the morning basically going out to meet with people whom I knew and literally to walk through the cafeteria or the Foreign Service Lounge to see if I could encounter colleagues whom I might be able to corral into these jobs. As I was about to enter my office I ran into Art Tienken, who said, "I have been looking for you all morning, Fairchild." I said, "Art, half of my jobs have no bidders. If I sit in my office waiting for you to come by or call then I'll never fill all these jobs. I've got to go out and do things like troll for people in the cafeteria." In fact I

think my job was made a little easier by having Foreign Service tandem couples, and the cooperative response by the personnel system to try to accommodate them where possible.

*Q: You might explain what a tandem couple is.*

FAIRCHILD: A tandem couple is a married couple both of whom work for the State Department, or couples where one spouse is State and the other with another foreign affairs agency...for example a State Department Foreign Service Officer married to a USIA officer, or in some cases a CIA officer married to a State Department officer. In a lot of these less than garden-spot African posts I would try to help arrange things so the USIA wife, for example, would get assigned to the post first and then we could find a good job for the husband in the political section of the same embassy. I met at least twice a week with the Africa Bureau Executive Director, Jim Moran at the time, to review the administrative jobs, including secretarial jobs. Usually Jim Bishop was the deputy assistant secretary in the Africa Bureau who was designated to handle other personnel issues and to make final personnel decisions for the Bureau. When I was the deputy in the regional affairs office I used to go regularly with Jim to meet with the person in the Pentagon who was the senior official for defense assistance matters in Africa. So Jim and I already had a good personal and working relationship. Chet did not get much involved in personnel issues, in fact as I was leaving this job I called on him before going to Niger, and he asked, "Do you have any parting words of advice for me?" I said, "Yes, just one Chet. I think you need to develop personal relationships with people like the Director General of the Foreign Service and others who you may need to call on for help in getting personnel decisions that may not exactly follow all the rules." He then said, "Well, Jim Bishop does a pretty good job, doesn't he?" I replied, "Yes, he does an excellent job, but there are those rare occasions when the Assistant Secretary for Africa needs to call the Director General of the Foreign Service, and if it is a matter of Chet calling George that is a lot better than just titles talking to each other." He said, "I will think about that." I don't know if Chet ever did what I suggested, but I rather suspect he did not.

*Q: Well did you find you were getting into horse-trading? For example, I will give you so and so if you will give me so and so, or we do this and you do that? That sort of thing.*

FAIRCHILD: I don't think there was that much direct horse-trading as such, certainly not as an explicitly stated *quid pro quo*. There was certainly competition in what we call the Friday panels. Those were the inter-functional panels, when the heads of the different offices in this section of personnel dealt with assignments and counseling got together to discuss and formalize assignments in Foreign Service generalist categories. People voted on the person to be assigned, and only rarely did they actually resort to written votes as I understand it. It may have happened once or twice, and I was told for example when it came to that job in Paris that I coveted earlier a secret ballot was held since one of the bidders on the job, and who ultimately got the job, was the AF assignments officer at the time. But you would find there were natural alliances, for example, I would speak in support of someone with Western Hemisphere experience who wanted to get a good job in Europe to make the point that people who slog away in Third World trenches deserve an occasional good job in Europe. That was also done in the hope that the people at the table would reciprocate when I had an assignment proposal or argument and needed support from them. Jobs in Europe were considered hard to get, and some wags said the only way to get an EUR job was to be born there. Usually it was a matter of those who did Asia, the Western Hemisphere, and Africa ganging up on

the person who did Europe. But it wasn't always that way; there are of course large numbers of officers who want careers in the Western Hemisphere, Asia, and Africa. Also frequently the person who did European assignments brought highly questionable things to panel, like pushing for some officer who is about to have his fifth tour in Germany. I mean some of the proposals that EUR brought to panel were just outrageous and violated every supposed rule in the personnel book. We would regularly vote against that kind of thing, although some of these decisions got overturned. The way they got overturned was for example the person who was U.S. Ambassador in Germany knew he wanted this particular officer, and that particular ambassador was a political appointee and had close ties to the White house. So after this assignment was rejected by the panel of us august personnel types, the ambassador would call the White House. The White House would then call the State Department, the Secretary for example, who would call the Deputy Secretary who would call the Director General who would then "direct" the assignment of that person. The attitude that I had and my colleagues had around the table had was that we had been hired to enforce the rules, and our integrity with client officers and bureaus depended on our enforcing the rules. If we didn't do that we would not be well regarded and obviously not be dealt with honestly by our own colleagues. We had to play by the rules, but if we were overturned from on high by *force majeure* that was a different matter.

*Q: There is a certain aspect of slave market or meat market. There was a market place atmosphere to a certain extent. I mean things should go normally but then there were people who had influence who could bid.*

FAIRCHILD: Yes. The stars are always obvious in an organization like the Foreign Service, and they usually have their well placed patrons too. You know who they are and they pretty much get what they want, and they are quite often anointed by the senior people who want them – for example Secretaries of State, or Under Secretaries or Assistant Secretaries. Then of course there are people at the other end – the people who are hard to place, people who are regular under performers. I mean everybody can't be a star, and under performers tend to get known too. I will always remember one panel where the person who was the counselor for administrative officers said something like, "I have a number of problem children to be placed and I am going to announce who is going to get whom." We had to find a place for them. In the assignments panel meetings we always talked about this rule or that rule, and which rule had precedence. For example, did the "fair share rule" take precedence over a "service needs" situation where an officer with unmatched qualifications was being proposed for yet another job in Europe. But one of the most basic rules is that "everybody has to be somewhere." You can't have people just hanging around without jobs, so at the end of the day you have to place people in jobs. One of the things that occurred while I was there, and I am glad it happened, was the facility to "force assign" people. What do you do with people who don't want to play by the rules, people who don't want to bid on any hardship post or just say I am going to hold out for a job that is classed above my rank so that I will shine or get my preferred job in Europe. What do you do with those people? Well, what they developed and implemented for my second year in this job was a system of essentially forced assignments. We didn't call them that because that wouldn't be polite; we called the process "identification." So you would identify someone, or you would go to a counselor and say nobody has bid on this particular job and I need some candidates who may have not done their fair share of service in hardship posts, but I want some people who are qualified, so please give me a list of three or four individuals. I would gather and study their files, and then talk to the Africa Bureau

and we would identify someone. That person would either have to go to the assignment we chose, or convince personnel why he or she couldn't go. This got to be a little personal as you can imagine. I remember identifying one officer who was on his third tour for an economic job in Abidjan, in Ivory Coast. He regarded it almost as a sentence of death. I remember he called me one night at home and said, 'What do you have against me?' I said, "I don't have anything against you. Abidjan is one of the best posts I have to offer. If I had anything against you I would have identified you for Conakry or Mogadishu or some really unpleasant place." Well this officer resigned from the Foreign Service rather than go to Abidjan. I was just stunned; I was absolutely stunned. Another person I identified at the end of my time in Personnel was an administrative officer, a woman officer. She was forced assigned to what ended up being my next post, where I was to be the DCM and she was the administrative counselor. I was feeling a bit uneasy when she arrived at post, so I decided to go out to the airport to meet her – not to have somebody else do it. She was a real trouper – a total professional. Elaine Schunter was her name, and the first thing she said after getting out of plane was, "I just want you to know there are no hard feelings. I am going to do a bang up job here in Niamey." And she did just that.

*Q: I knew Elaine in Saigon.*

FAIRCHILD: She was very good, but I was a bit worried that she might have some grudges about having this forced assignment that might negatively affect her job performance.

*Q: Well one of the things about working in personnel is you can often get the ongoing assignment you want, or at least you have a look at the shopping list and maneuver, and not always get exactly the right one but get a reasonably good assignment. How did it work out for you?*

FAIRCHILD: There were three solid possibilities toward the end of that assignment, and they were all quite interesting ones. One was to be the consul general in Durban, South Africa. In spite of being one of the smallest of the consulates general, I think there were only three Americans there, maybe four, this was basically the U.S. embassy to the Zulu nation. I also had heard that the residence of the American consul general in Durban was one of the most magnificent buildings in all of Africa, better than the residence most Ambassadors had elsewhere. So there were some interesting side benefits in an assignment like that, and clearly it was an important position given the centrality of Southern Africa issues at that time. That was mine for the asking, if I wanted it. At one point, this was the spring of 1985, I had "recruiting calls" from two deputy assistant secretaries in the Near East Bureau. One of them was Arnie Raphael, who had been my A-100 classmate; the other one, Robert Peck, was someone I knew mainly through a few poker games I had attended over the years. They were interested in knowing if I would go out to Kabul as the chargé. It was a difficult time in Afghanistan, the government in place was the communist government of Babrak Karmal, and the Russian were still in Afghanistan. Both Arnie and Robert knew that I had been in Kabul before, and had the language as well as a good feel for the country. Our kids seemed to be fairly well stabilized in their lives at that point, and my wife said she would like to go out there again. But there was a problem in that it was a no family post, meaning no dependents were allowed to go to post. This was something we had decided as a matter of "reciprocity" with the Afghan government. The limited the number of people we could have was determined by the fact that we limited the Afghan presence here. Moreover our embassy in Kabul was primarily an intelligence platform, with a State top layer and then lots of intelligence people. So, if dependents

were to be authorized they would displace intelligence officers – and nobody wanted that to occur. I went back both Robert and Arnie and said we would be very happy to go back to Kabul. As you know, my wife is Iranian by birth, so she has the language. We could have been a great team out there because with Afghan society being the way it is, there are things that men just can't do. You just can't engage with women very well, and I knew that my wife would be able to do that. But Arnie said that was the wrong answer, although he said the Bureau would think about it. After about a week they called back and said, no we can't have any dependents. At the time several other embassies had dependents there. The UN did, the Japanese did, and others too. But there was also some real war danger in Kabul at the time. The Mujahideen were firing rockets into town, although they were obviously not targeting American residences because they knew that we were on their side. Then at one point the DCM job in Niamey was suggested by Jim Bishop and agreed to by Dick Bogosian, who was the head of East African affairs and was about to go out as ambassador to Niger. He asked me to be his number two there. I thought that would be a good job, more meaningful in a career sense than the consul general job in Durban, and it did turn out to be a good job. Niamey was a good-sized embassy; we had about 50 people there at the time. Half of them were USAID people, and we had another 50 USAID contractors in town and another 20 or so upcountry. We had an 18 million dollar development assistance program there, and a 4.5 million dollar military assistance program – not lethal equipment, just uniforms, boots, and things like that – and a training program as well. So I thought that was a good country to go to, plus if not on the front pages it was at least a country that had been targeted by Libya and was thus in Washington's focus.

*Q: Was this the period of the Tuareg wars, or before or after them?*

FAIRCHILD: Well I think those are a more recent phenomenon, but they are all over the Sahel now. That means in Mauritania, Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso. No doubt that Al Qaeda in the Muslim Maghreb is making mischief among these Tuareg nomads, maybe also among the Peul or Fulani nomads, but in some way these wars are pigeons coming home to roost since these Sahelian governments regularly and systematically tried to repress the nomads and prevent their cross-border movement over the past 40 years or so. Many of the governments in question also used the combination of periodic famines and their own grip on food aid to get the nomads to stay in one place – the term of art is “sedentarize” them – the better to control and tax them. And as you can imagine the places chosen were not the best lands for their herds of sheep, goats and cattle.

*Q: Yes, but there was some of that, maybe only in Chad, no?*

FAIRCHILD: I think in Chad it was mainly inter-ethnic conflict. The Libyans were always the spoilers they; they would always support one group against another. I think Hissène Habré, although he was a thoroughly vicious person, was the only one of the various Chadian ethnic warlords who had never sold out to the Libyans, at least at that time. He is still living in exile too, in Dakar, as the Senegalese under President Abdoulaye Wade granted him asylum. Part of Habré's story is somewhat reminiscent of Napoleon's return to France after the exile in Elba. Habré was known as the butcher of Abeche, where he allegedly massacred a lot of people. But as his troops got closer and closer to the capital N'Djamena the press in Chad started referring to him as the liberator. When Napoleon left Elba the Parisian press said, “The beast has escaped.” But the tone

got nicer as he got closer to Paris, and when he finally got to Paris most of the headlines read “Vive L’Empereur.”

*Q: All right how long were you in Niger?*

FAIRCHILD: It was a bit over two years. When I arrived there....

*Q: When did you arrive?*

FAIRCHILD: This would have been in the summer of 1985. Again our policy interest was principally humanitarian. But also we were trying to help Niger counter the Libyan threat, although the Libyan threat then was probably more potential than actual. I don’t know what the Libyans would have invaded Niger for, but Niger had other assets that might have been of interest to Libya. Their principal and maybe only mineral asset of note is uranium. The French, through a European consortium, set up uranium mines in the northern part of the country – Arlit is the principal location. I think the French did it mainly to have a reliable source of uranium for their own atomic reactor program and weapons program. So there was that policy interest. The government at the time I was there was a military dictatorship, but I think a benign one – or relatively benign one. Brigadier General Seyni Kountché was the head of state and head of government, and he had come to power by overthrowing the first president of the country – Hamani Diori – back in 1974. Diori was still alive, although he was living under house arrest. Diori was not allowed to receive foreign visitors, but I don’t believe he was mistreated by the military government. The government under Kountché was relatively enlightened, and had made a fair amount of money on what they called inventory sales of uranium in the early 1980’s. Rather than put it all in Swiss banks or buy a brace of new Mercedes, Kountché’s government used the money to improve the electric grid for the capital and also for the rest of the country. They also invested some of the funds in the capital’s water purification plant. So, they put a lot of it in public works. That said, General Kountché and his government were not much interested in expanding democracy. We made occasional representations, but we didn’t make a big deal of it. Remember, this was during the Reagan administration when we averted our gaze from problems like this if the government was supportive of our larger interests. Later on they did eventually have elections, but this was long after I left.

*Q: Well you have got a military dictatorship, relatively benign.*

FAIRCHILD: Not unique to Africa, I should add, although the benign part is not always the case.

*Q: OK, but you have got not much going on. You have got a political section, with no politics going on. And an economic section with a couple of extractive industries. In other words there doesn’t seem to be much going on there. What did you do?*

FAIRCHILD: We shared multiple jobs. For example our economic officer was a man named Jim Entwistle, and he was also the consular officer. So he had two hats to wear. By the way, Jim is currently our ambassador to the Congo, in Kinshasa. There is always reporting you can do on economic activity and provide information on U.S. goods and services to those local business people seeking commercial information, and I think between the two jobs he managed to stay

relatively well employed. Interaction with the chief of state and members of the government was mainly handled by the ambassador and me. Our political section was actually a one-man operation at the time, and he managed to keep occupied too. We had a two-person military attaché office, and they oversaw the military assistance program we had then – about \$4.5 million, all non-lethal equipment as I mentioned earlier as well as training – International Military Education and Training, known by the acronym IMET.

*Q: But I mean do we have any interests there outside of a UN vote, keeping Qadhafi at bay, etc.?*

FAIRCHILD: Helping fight the occasional famine was an interest, but that of course was and is part of our humanitarian concerns. No, we had a rather limited menu of interests there, which is not untypical of most of our embassies in most parts of Africa.

*Q: Well you are up in that band there where the desert is encroaching.*

FAIRCHILD: Yes, it is called the Sahel – from an Arabic word meaning “shore” or “coast.” But in this case the ocean of which this region is the coast refers to the ocean of sand known as the Sahara Desert.

*Q: What was going on with that?*

FAIRCHILD: Well, it was steadily expanding – and still is. I remember making a trip to a couple of cities in the interior, one of which was a town called Tahoua where we had a small team from Tufts University working on a livestock project. Tahoua was just totally brown and barren, although one could see an occasional blade of grass or a scraggly tree here or there. A friend and colleague of mine was the Political Affairs Director in the Foreign Ministry, and since he was from Tahoua he told me he wanted to talk to me when I got back and give him my impressions of his hometown. So when I got back I called him, and he asked, “What did you think about it?” I said it was an interesting town and the people had been very hospitable, but that my main impression was how brown and barren everything seemed. He then said, “When I was a boy in Tahoua it was green everywhere.” So, in the course of this one man’s life, he was in his late 40’s at the time, this town went from being on the green edge of the desert to being virtually part of it. The Sahara is expanding more and more every year.

I should mention that when I was in Tahoua I called on the prefect, *prefet* in French, at the time – the person who was in charge of this administrative part of the country. His name was Tandja Mamadou, and he was a Lieutenant Colonel at the time. He eventually became chief of state two persons removed after General Kountché, who died shortly after I left the country. Tandja Mamadou was quite an impressive character, a tough but knowledgeable and fair person. I think he might have been cast in a mould similar to that of Kountché, but he didn’t have quite the level of social graces nor was he as good at public relations as Kountché. We had a number of USAID projects that if they could have been followed up on would have been quite helpful for Niger – other Sahelian countries as well. There were a number of projects to help them plant trees as windbreaks to protect crops. These weren’t projects that just involved a bunch of foreigners there helping plant seedlings; they had been pretty much taken over by the people who lived there and were serving as demonstration projects for other farmers who were by then planting trees as



windbreaks. If they weren't thriving, they were at least doing pretty well. But, you are right – the environmental degradation is appalling in that part of the world. People chop down and burn trees to make charcoal, so we had Peace Corps programs to help introduce simple but cheap and efficient cookers so that people could prepare their meals using considerably less fuel. Niger is one of the poorest nations in the world, by any standard.

*Q: Did they have any problems with their other neighbor – meaning Mali, Chad, Nigeria, Algeria...other than Libya?*

FAIRCHILD: I think Libya was the only country Niger had political difficulties with at the time. All of these countries shared a certain common interest in dealing with the nomads in the area, as I mentioned earlier.

*Q: Was Niger basically a Muslim country?*

FAIRCHILD: Yes, about 99%. I remember once Ambassador Dick Bogosian and I were talking with General Kountché. We were asking about Niger's membership in the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), at a time just before Kountché was about to go off to a meeting of the Organization. The Ambassador said something like, "Could you tell us what the Islamic Conference all about? What do you have to do to be a member? Do you have to have a percentage of your population be Muslim before you can be a member?" Kountché laughed as he lit up another Gauloise – he was a chain smoker of Gauloises – and said, "No, there are a lot of member countries like Niger with about 99% of the people who are Muslim. And then there are countries like Gabon, where as far as I can tell only President Bongo is a Muslim." El Hadj Omar Bongo, as he was known after he converted to Islam, led a country where most of the population are either Christian or animist, but because the chief of state is Muslim Gabon qualified for membership. So, Kountché was basically telling us that it is a pretty loose organization, although the country members must have some state identity with the Islamic religion.

I have one anecdote that I just have to tell you. I remember an event that occurred shortly after I arrived, and I was still the Chargé because it was a couple of months before Dick Bogosian arrived. Kountché invited the heads of all missions to participate in some kind of Arbor Day ceremony where we would all go out and plant trees. The new Chargé of the Iranian embassy, the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, was there at this ceremony, and he was shaking hands with everyone and going around introducing himself. His French was rather fractured, and he came over to me and introduced himself as the new Chargé. I replied by saying, in my best Farsi, "Happy to meet you. I am the Chargé of the Embassy of the Great Satan." He pulled his hand back as though I were a leper, and turned and walked away very quickly. That was not very diplomatic of me, I suppose, but I just couldn't resist the temptation.

*Q: You were in Niger when?*

FAIRCHILD: 1983 to 1985.

*Q: Were the Soviets pulling down their embassy at that point?*

FAIRCHILD: This is very interesting, and it's a very good question. The Soviets were there, but they were considerably more relaxed than I had ever seen Soviets anywhere else. I think part of it was due to the fact the ambassador and his DCM were not Russians. One was Georgian and the other Armenian, which was quite a new thing for me too. They were extremely relaxed and friendly, much more outgoing and both proficient in French, and basically much more open than most Soviets I had encountered up until then. In separate conversations each of them reminded me that their people had become part of Western civilization, meaning of course part of the Christian world, hundreds of years before their Russian compatriots.

It was still the Soviet Union, however, and I ended up traveling back to Washington via Moscow because of the job I was going to after I left Niger. We were working on what we first called the "FSN replacement program" because the Soviet government, in fact under Mikhail Gorbachev, had decided to forbid all Soviet citizens from working for the U.S. Embassy. This they did in order to retaliate for our having bounced about 40 Soviet diplomats out of New York for "activities incompatible with their diplomatic status" – in other words for spying. So, suddenly all the local employees were gone from our Embassy in Moscow. I was tasked with investigating how the contractors, cleared American contractors, were working out for the Embassy.

*Q: How did you and your wife find social life there?*

FAIRCHILD: We found it was rather nice. There was a good-sized American community, and of course we had a social life with them. But a lot of Americans there, probably because their French wasn't that good, tended to be insular and not have friends outside the embassy community unless they spoke English. We had lots of friends in the French community, the embassy itself, USAID, and of course other embassies. There is not a lot to do in Niamey after work is over, anyway there wasn't at the time. My wife and I would go play tennis in the morning while it was still bearable. November, December, January is a good time for tennis, but in what passes for springtime there the temperature can reach 125 degrees plus in the shade. At some point we learned of the existence of an informal poker club that was headed by the French Ambassador, Claude Soubeste. It was a coed club, and Soubeste's wife played too. Other members were Jean-Claude Fiol, who was the Agence France Presse representative, and Claude Chantrel, who represented the Banque Nationale de Paris and worked at whatever local affiliate they had. We met at least every other Sunday afternoon at each other's house; we would take turns hosting the poker party. Normally we would gather about 3:00 in the afternoon, and play cards until 7:00 or 7:30 when people would go out to whatever they had going on that evening, a dinner party or whatever. Generally we did not drink anything except wine, and then not until about 6:00 or so. It was a lot of fun, and there was a good camaraderie among all of us. I remember once being at the French Ambassador's residence for such a poker session when he got a phone call from Paris. It was clear he was talking to the French foreign minister who was planning to arrive unexpectedly the next day for a meeting with President Kountché. After he put the receiver down, Soubeste gave me a quizzical look, and I said, "Claude, am I supposed to have heard that?" He replied, "Well it is not secret but we are just not going to talk about it publicly. Please feel free to tell Dick Bogosian about it, however." Well, I would have done that anyway, even if Claude Soubeste had not "authorized" it. I should add that there in Niger we practiced what I was used to in other Francophone African countries – namely we had an informal agreement with the French that should there be any sort of civil strife or internal turmoil that threatened foreigners' lives all Americans would be considered honorary

Frenchmen, at least for the purposes of evacuation. We were fairly sure that the French would have soldiers and planes in there to evacuate people a lot faster than Washington would or could get organized for that.

*Q: Was there much contact with high-ranking Nigeriens?*

FAIRCHILD: Certainly at a professional level, yes. In other words you would entertain and meet with officials in a government ministry but they would not reciprocate entertainment the way we would. That was mainly because they were usually people of limited resources who didn't have homes that were like ours or have entertainment allowances. They would reciprocate by doing things at the ministry where they would invite the heads of diplomatic missions or certain others depending on the event being celebrated. So you had good professional relationships but not a lot of social life except at your own home.

I remember vividly one event in 1986 at the presidential palace that occurred on the day after the United States attacked Tripoli in retaliation for the bombing of a discotheque in Germany in which the Libyan government was complicit, or rather the instigator. In any case that evening President Kountché was hosting a reception and *mechoui* – that's an outdoor barbecue featuring goats or sheep stuffed with vegetables and cous cous – for the diplomatic corps, and despite the bill of fare was a black tie event. That same morning when I went into the Embassy of course there were lots of cables about the attack, what led to it, why we did it, and other pertinent information. I came in a bit before the ambassador, and had reviewed all the cables by the time he entered the office. Just as he came in he had a call from President Kountché's *chef de cabinet*, sort of his chief executive assistant. I heard the ambassador say, "I just got into the office, why don't I put on Mr. Fairchild who can tell you everything we know." Fortunately most of the cables were unclassified because they just wanted to recount what happened. So I was giving a run down to the *chef de cabinet*, and when I finished he said nothing. He finally asked, "Well, did you get him?" Meaning Qadhafi, of course. I said the cables didn't indicate whether Qadhafi was killed or not, but I promised to be in touch as more information became available. At the *mechoui* that night they had invited the ambassador and the number two from each embassy, so both Dick and I and our wives were attending. The French Embassy had a lot more people than that, of course. It was just an amazing event because as people came in they would come over to us and shake our hand and say something like, "I don't know what my government is going to say about this, but we just want to say hooray for you for going after this evil man." These are Africans I'm talking about now, not Europeans who were a little more restrained – although even they seemed sympathetic. I noticed the Libyan ambassador and his number two were scowling off in a corner and looking very lonely and very uncomfortable during the entire evening.

*Q: Among our interests of course were these countries' UN votes. How stood Niger UN wise as we saw them?*

FAIRCHILD: Fairly well I think. There were one or two issues over my two years there where they did not vote with us. I remember having to deliver a fairly stern message to my Political Affairs Director friend at the Foreign Ministry, and at one point I said something like the American people don't understand how countries that are friendly and with whom we share so many values can vote against us on such an important issue. I know the issue was not on Puerto

Rican independence, nor on issues regarding the Caribbean. The Nigeriens were very careful to consider our overarching interest on UN issues that affected our geographic backyard, and they never opposed us on those issues as I recall. But in response to my comment he said, “We trust that a great people like the Americans would be understanding in certain situations where we feel we have to vote in a certain way.” They were kind of tough, as most Francophone Africans were, on trade issues, reciprocal customs agreements, and so forth. We would always press these countries to support totally open trade, and they would invariably have preferential arrangements with France that worked to their benefit and of course to France’s benefit. They saw no particular advantage to lining up with us for totally free trade around the world. I enjoyed particularly dealing with this Political Affairs Director because his previous post had been at the Nigerien UN mission in New York, so when some of these demarches on arcane issues would come in for me to present – for example something on manganese nodules on the sea bed – he knew all the issues cold. One could have a real substantive discussion with him. On the manganese nodules he said something like, “Even though we are a land-locked country we have an interest in these issues because they basically involve the property of all mankind and not just one country whose offshore capabilities are greater than those of us who have no shore.” He was quite well informed on all of these UN issues, and Niger generally supported what I would call Western positions.

*Q: Speaking of landlocked countries, I think it was with Chad, I have interviewed somebody who had to present a demarche for a vote on a whaling problem. The foreign minister listened to this and said, “I think we will support you on this, but what is a whale?”*

FAIRCHILD: That is a funny story, even if apocryphal. This Political Affairs Director didn’t need anyone to tell him what a whale was, however. But the usual response in a lot of other countries would be something like “we will make note of your demarche and let you know what we decide to do about it.” Of course they would never get back to you. The way you found out would be however they voted in the UN, or the International Labor Organization, or whatever. The Nigeriens were fairly good about using these occasions provided by our demarches to do a little horse-trading. Not that they would lay down a strict *quid pro quo*, but they would say things like, “We take note of this and we are fairly sure we can support your position. We will let you know. By the way, there is a Nigerien candidate for the International Labor Office’s number two job, and we would certainly hope the United States could support our candidate.” Of course I would have to say, “Well, er, um, let me check with Washington,” because you never knew what deals had already been cut elsewhere. They certainly knew how to play that game.

*Q: Of course. Well you left there, in the first place were there any terrorist problems ?*

FAIRCHILD: I think it is fair to say none whatsoever. At least not while I was there. There were incidents of burglaries or attempted break-ins at our residences. Those happened with distressing regularity, but none of our people was ever physically harmed.

*Q: Well were there any acts of violence with you or any other Americans in the area that you had to deal with?*

FAIRCHILD: No, I don’t think so. None at all. There were occasional inconveniences, such as one Sunday morning when the Mauritanian Charge hired some unskilled workers to chop down or

prune some trees, and one of them fell over and knocked down the power line that linked to our home and several other in the neighborhood. By the way, it is worth noting that the Nigerien power people had the thing fixed and back up running by 5:00 on the same afternoon. I don't think you can say the same thing for PEPCO in the District of Columbia or Maryland, for example. Sometimes things work well if not always better in the Third World. Some years after we left, I recall reading about someone from our embassy in Niamey – the Marine security guard's gunnery sergeant, I think – who was killed during a late-night carjacking incident near a local restaurant. But other than that Niamey was a relatively peaceful place.

*Q: Well you left there when?*

FAIRCHILD: This would have been the summer of 1987. I should explain how I ended up headed for my next assignment, which was the Office of Management Operations in Washington. At some point during the spring of my last year, Jim Bishop sent out a telegram asking for volunteers to be Charge in Benin because Ambassador George Moose was going back to head up the Office of Management Operations and there was no new ambassador in the pipeline to replace him at that point. They needed a series of experienced officers from nearby posts to “mind the store” because the officers they had at the embassy were brand new, and the most senior person was from another agency and they didn't think it would be appropriate to have that person be Charge. So I talked to my boss, Dick Bogosian, and he said, “Go for it. Things are slow now.” So I went down to Benin.

While I was there Joseph Verner Reed, who was one of our ambassadors to the UN, came on a pre-United Nations General Assembly swing to lobby on various issues. That was an interesting experience, and he was quite a character...very punctilious about protocol. He of course later became Chief of Protocol in the Department, remembered most famously if perhaps uncharitably as the Chief of Protocol who resigned following the unfortunate incident involving a too tall podium for the Queen of England that obscured all but her hat. But that day in Cotonou he wanted to know for example why I arranged the table the way I did for the luncheon I had in his honor. Of course I had a good answer for everything. He noticed that his number two was not sitting down at the end with him, the foreign minister, and me. So Mr. Reed asked, “Why?” I said, “Your cable regarding the visit noted that your number two doesn't speak French, so I didn't think it would be fair or correct to have him sit in the middle of people who will only be speaking French.” He then said something like, “Of course, I should have thought of that.”

The Government of Benin at the time was headed by a Communist military man, Mathieu Kerekou. They had a number of Marxist inspired slogans that people were required to use in daily life. For example, when the Beninese would answer the phone they were required to say “*Pret pour la revolution,*” ready for the revolution. The obligatory response was something like “*A bas les mercenaires,*” down with mercenaries. They referred to Kerekou as “*notre camerade de lutte,*” our comrade in the struggle. I should add parenthetically that Kerekou ultimately allowed a national conference to occur and to effectively ease him out of power, following which there were real elections in Benin. He came back in a subsequent election to become president again, but this time as a free market advocate and born-again Christian. Funny how democracy – no matter how imperfect – frequently helps bring what the people want to power. And perhaps I should add, for better or for worse.

As I was driving with George Moose and his wife to the airport for their departure for Washington, he said, "What are you going to do after this assignment in Niger?" I said, "I really want to go back to Washington. Every one of the jobs that I bid on is a stretch," meaning classed above my personal rank so they were pretty much long shots. I didn't know whether they would work out or not. But George then said, "Well if they don't work out I have got a slot for an FSO-1 in the Office of Management Operations. Why don't you give me a call." I said, "That sounds very interesting, thank you George." None of my stretch bids worked out, so I eventually bid on and got accepted for that job.

*Q: OK, so we will pick this up in 1987 when you are back going to the office of financial management?*

FAIRCHILD: No, this was the extended staff of the Undersecretary for Management. It was called M/MO, management operations. I knew that I was going to be working on a number of portfolios including the European portfolio in general and some Eastern European and Soviet issues in particular, including the replacement of our Foreign Service National Employees there (FSNs). That is why they sent me via Moscow on the way home. I later asked George why he gave me the European portfolio since most of my direct experience in Europe came from taking vacations there from Third World posts. He said something like, "I know that you know what the issues are all about, and you can learn more about them quickly, but also I know that you won't be angling for a job in Europe, so there is no chance that you can be anything but a very honest broker in all of this." And of course George was right. That story also provides a little insight into Foreign Service thinking on such matters.

*Q: Ok, with Al Fairchild. Al it is I guess now 1987. You are coming to the Office of Management Operations; you might explain what the office was and what you did.*

FAIRCHILD: Sure. I was coming back from Niamey, and I was coming back via Moscow because the Office of Management Operations (M/MO) where I worked wanted me to talk to the embassy staff there. We had just lost all of our local employees there, as I noted earlier, and one of my portfolios was to be in what we called the FSN replacement program. We later changed the name to the more felicitous "cleared American contractor" program. But basically it was to make sure that we couldn't have happen to us elsewhere a replication of happened in the Soviet Union where we lost all of our local employees by host government fiat. This Office of Management Operations was and I think remains to this day under the newer name of Management Policy the extended staff arm of the Undersecretary for Management, who at the time was Ron Spiers. The portfolio of every officer in M/MO was a combination of geographic and functional – usually with a few special projects as well. I had a number of special projects, such as various thorny personnel issues and post closings. "Post closings" was an especially interesting portfolio, and I managed two series of them while in M/MO. Periodically the Department has found it necessary to close some posts, usually consulates, and open others as political and economic requirements and interests change over time and budgets become tighter. My favorite example is to cite the former consulates in Manchester and Leeds in the UK; they were very important in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, but are clearly not needed today. I had to coordinate usually with the special assistant to the Undersecretary for Political Affairs to make sure that we didn't inadvertently step on too many wrong toes. We also had to clear post closing plans with the office of the Secretary. These were very sensitive issues,

closing posts. We did close one or two embassies in one of the two post closing operations I was involved in – the Comoros and Equatorial Guinea, although we reopened Equatorial Guinea not long afterward as oil was discovered there and came on stream. It was during one the post closing operations that I had the pleasure of meeting Marc Grossman for the very first time, because he was the special assistant to the Under Secretary for Political Affairs. He was always very thoughtful, attentive to detail without getting absorbed by it, and decisive.

*Q: Let's talk a bit more about post closings. I served in Naples and was always concerned about we had too many posts like Naples, but they had been there since time immemorial. What were some of your impressions about closing posts?*

FAIRCHILD: Well, I think it is one of those exercises where there is an awful lot of pain for very little gain, although clearly we can't keep every post open forever. Every post, every consulate, every embassy too for that matter, has a passionate constituent somewhere on Capitol Hill. I remember on one of the lists we proposed closing Salzburg. That post was especially beloved of Claiborne Pell, who at the time was chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. I believe the Department at one point made an unofficial promise to him that we would keep Salzburg open for as long as he was on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. He was in the Foreign Service once, as you know, and that was one of his posts. And although one can save some money over time by closing posts, or at least free up funds for other uses, it takes several years to begin seeing those savings. In the short term, by contrast, one has to spend money to close posts – for example on severance pay for local employees, for lease terminations, and a host of other expenses.

*Q: I think he was in Genoa and in Bratislava too.*

FAIRCHILD: Bratislava for sure, although I am unsure about Genoa. I recall that the Austrians got a whiff of what was in store for Salzburg, because they found an occasion as we were working on the list that featured Salzburg to invite Senator Pell to Austria and give him a medal of one kind or another. I heard the medal described as the Austrian equivalent of the third class of the “*merite agricole*” in France, meaning that it was a rather small decoration of little distinction, but that was probably apocryphal. The intention of the medal presentation was of course to solidify Pell's support for keeping Salzburg open. And that worked....at least for a while.

In this job I had regular contact with Ron Spiers. I remember when I went to call on him when I first arrived, as we shook hands he said, “I think we have met before haven't we?” I said, “Yes sir. When you were director of PM, the Political/Military Bureau, you sold me your used car.” He suddenly had this look of horror on his face and said, “God, I hope it wasn't a clunker.” I said, “No, it was that white Volkswagen, and it was pretty good little car.” Once I had a call from Mr. Spiers who wanted me to come to his office and sort out a problem he had. He liked to call action officers directly, which is fine but I of course informed the Deputy Director of M/MO, Ed Dillery, who eventually headed the office later on and who has become a very good friend of mine. I told him I was going down to see the Under Secretary, and what assignment I was getting. Sometimes Under Secretaries for Management pass out assignments without telling the bosses of their constituent offices. This particular problem was both interesting and tricky, because some people in the office of the inspector general had pulled what I can only describe as a sneak inspection at

some local warehouse managed by the Bureau of Diplomatic Security. There they found a number of things that weren't exactly in order, things that were left in the open that shouldn't have been, and the warehouse the door was unlocked. Instead of dealing with the head of Diplomatic Security or the Under Secretary, somebody on the inspection team went straight to whatever oversight subcommittee on the Hill was responsible for this sort of thing. So basically you had a three-way spitting context going on – OIG, DS, and this committee on the Hill, and they were all mad at each other. When I asked “And what would you like me to do about this, sir?”, he replied, “Make it go away. Make them get together and play nice.” So that is the kind of thing I got involved in. It wasn't easy to do that, of course, but after about a week or ten days I helped all involved determine that they could in fact play nice and bury the hatchet. OIG committed to not use sneak inspections anymore, DS promised to clean up their warehouse situation, and the people on the Hill were satisfied with the new arrangements in all of this.

One of the other things of note during the time I was in M/MO was the merger of that office with what was then known as the Office of the Comptroller. So you had a new bureau created, something called the Bureau of Finance and Management Policy (FMP). This was the brainchild of Ivan Selin, who was then the Undersecretary for Management. He wanted to have for one shop that could give him advice in terms of both policy as well as money. As you might suspect, in situations like that usually money considerations came out on top. That made it frequently frustrating for some of us who thought that policy should trump money considerations – at least once in a while. When James Baker became Secretary of State, the new Chief Financial Officer and head of this new bureau was a political appointee named Jill Kent. She had worked for Secretary Baker when he was at Treasury, and he brought her to the Department. Ivan left after about two years to become head of the Nuclear Regulatory Agency, and was replaced as Under Secretary for Management by John F. W. Rogers – another person who had worked for Baker at Treasury and before that at the White House.

About this same time there were historic developments in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, developments that ultimately led to the collapse of the Soviet empire. These events led to increasing attention being given to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). In the Department's budget we previously had a million or just under a million dollars allocated for supporting U.S. participation in the CSCE. It became obvious to me and to a few others in EUR that the CSCE was going to become increasingly important and demand more resources in a very short time, especially as the Soviet empire was beginning to come unglued, at least in terms of its client states in Eastern Europe. If this did come to pass, we were going to need a hell of a lot more money than a million dollars in the budget for many other conferences that were likely to occur under the CSCE umbrella. So, although it took some time, we managed to beef up this account to about eight million dollars, which was needed almost immediately as developments moved apace in Eastern Europe. The CFO, Jill Kent, decided on the basis of this that I was if not brilliant at least smarter than the average toiler in her vineyard, and she decided to keep me on. I say “keep me on” because this was the time that my career in the Foreign Service was coming to a close. I had been caught by the so-called “six year window” in the 1980 Foreign Service Act that requires that officers be mandatorily retired if they fail to get promoted in the Senior Foreign Service within six years of declaring themselves for competition. Parenthetically I should add that I declared for competition about three years before I had to do so, in the mistaken belief that I would easily be promoted given my combination of virtues, talents, and experience. What I did not



realize at the time was that the playing field was changing radically, and that various factors were converging to reduce dramatically the number of promotions available to FSO-1 officers. Specifically, fewer senior officers were leaving the service, principally as a result of liberal use of the “limited career extension” authorized in the 1980 Foreign Service Act whereby senior officers could be retained even after they had reached a mandatory retirement situation. So, what the leadership of the FMP Bureau did was to arrange for me to stay in my job, and this they accomplished by converting the position from a Foreign Service to a Civil Service position. There was also a requirement levied whereby the changed position was limited to my incumbency, since the Foreign Service is understandably most reluctant to give up its positions. I was very glad it happened this way, of course, especially since I had already explored job possibilities in the private sector and found the pickings mighty slim if one wished to stay in the Washington area.

So, I continued after that as a Civil Servant in FMP. One of the other fascinating portfolios I picked up along the way came to me after the FMP Bureau had been split into a separate Office of Management Policy (M/MP) reporting directly to the Under Secretary and the rump FMP organization that was in essence the budget shop. This was my work as the Department’s liaison with what was called the National Performance Review – the NPR. This was the management improvement program under the Clinton administration that was applied throughout the entire U.S. government. President Clinton put Vice President Al Gore in charge of it, so we basically related to his office and to people who were assigned to his office to implement the management reforms. One of the regular managers of this program was Elaine Kamarck, who was then and I think remains to this day one of the so-called Super Delegates on the Democratic National Committee. Another was Bob Stone, who had a long and successful history of working on management issues in the Defense Department. I think the NPR was basically a good effort, and a lot of their programs were very useful and worked out well for most of the government. Often the NPR’s organizational and managerial operations, however, reminded me of what Will Rogers said – “I’m not a member of an organized political party; I’m a Democrat.” There was a fair amount of organized dilettantism and ad hocery in the operation of the NPR, and that tended to frustrate a lot of senior government employees whose responsibilities ended up being “improved” by the NPR. Among their real successes, however, was their focus on developing a customer service mentality throughout the federal bureaucracy. That was a good idea, and it didn’t matter whether your customer was a member of the public or another U.S. government agency or a Hill committee or whatever. The idea was to get people to think in customer service terms, and to provide the kind of service and information to other people that you would like to have provided to you... and with the same courtesy and promptness. They also focused on reducing certain types of positions in government, for example what they call “checkers.” This referred to those positions where the task was to check up on the work of other people. Obviously they were not targeting an inspection function like the Inspector General’s office; that was quite a different matter. They reduced a number of overall full time government positions, although I was never really sure whether this was compensated for by a subsequent increase on the contractor side. But I remember the administration pointing to a figure like a quarter of a million positions that were eliminated, either through the departure of the incumbent or some other way. In my NPR liaison capacity I worked closely with Dick Moose, no relation to George Moose, who became Undersecretary for Management under the Clinton Administration.

Also toward the end of the 1990's I became very much involved in developing what became known as the Department's strategic planning process. This is the process whereby all U.S. diplomatic missions in the world prepared an annual report outlining specifically how it proposed to accomplish the Department's overarching strategic goals through shorter-term goals and objectives in country. Each mission also outlined the metrics it planned to use to track whether it was making progress or not on its goals and objectives. At the time we called it the "mission program plan," or MPP, although eventually it became known as the "mission performance plan" to make it a little more in keeping with the law that required all of this – the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA). Each bureau in the Department was also required to do the same. Then an agency level plan was developed, and subsequent agency-wide reports were submitted showing how we had done in terms of what we said we were going to do. It was all very intuitive and common sense, but the process was very labor intensive as you can imagine. It was also vigorously resisted initially by the Foreign Service subculture whose mantra was and maybe still is something like "we deal in solving crises, and one can't plan for crises." That of course is pure nonsense, since a lot of what we do can be planned and measured very easily – for example administrative operations, consular affairs, development assistance, human rights programs, and many others. In the early stages of the strategic planning process, and here I'm talking about the late 1990s, I was one of a three-person team that developed and managed the whole process. This troika sometimes referred to itself as the "gang of three," drawing upon an unfortunate example from recent Chinese history. I represented M/P, and hence the Under Secretary for Management; Paula Lettice from the budget office that controlled the State Operations budget accounts represented the CFO; and Todd Greentree worked on International Operations accounts (foreign assistance programs principally) and represented the Secretary's Office of Reports, Plans, and Policy.

Just about the time the strategic planning process was coming into its own, I had an opportunity to be detailed to the Foreign Service Institute and manage the Sub-Saharan African Area Studies program. I was most interested in doing that, and the Foreign Service Institute and Africa Bureau was supportive of my doing so. The position in question was actually a Foreign Service position, but the "system" either had no candidate for the job or if they did there was no candidate whom FSI or the Africa Bureau thought was the right person for the job. So, I went to FSI in January 2000, and quite honestly I think it was one of the most thoroughly enjoyable tours of duty I ever had. It allowed me the chance to put together the kind of program that I wish I had been able to experience before I went off to my first post back in 1966. It was also both intellectually and at a personal level very satisfying to meet some of the experts on African affairs whose writings I had read over the years. I ended up doing about 1/3 of the lectures myself on various topics. I also used paid speakers, usually academics from the Washington area or sometimes from out of the area, for about another third of the lectures. The remaining third were "freebie" speakers or lecturers, who were people from the Department – usually from the Africa Bureau or from the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, but also from other functional bureaus like Human Rights. I also tried to be creative in getting speakers who could challenge the students and provide unique perspectives on Africa. For example, back in the late 1960's at a student conference the Department had sent me to I met a man named Les de Villiers, who was at that time the information officer at the South African Embassy here. Les subsequently had a "road to Damascus" experience in South Africa, quit the government, married an American lady, and moved to the United States. He became very close in fact with the leadership of the African

National Congress party of South Africa, and ended up doing some consultant work later with the South African Embassy here in the post-1994 period. He was living in Connecticut at the time I tracked him down, and I had him come and speak about what it was like to live in South Africa at the start of the Nationalist Party's rise to power in 1948, to work for them, and then leave the government. I thought he was a hell of a good speaker, and imbued his presentations with a personal and passionate element not often found in such area studies courses.

Eventually, however, the long arm of the Office of the Under Secretary for Management reached out and grabbed me back. In the fall of 2001, about a month or two after 9/11, I had a call from Dick Shinnick – an old friend from Foreign Service days – who was then the executive assistant to the new Under Secretary for Management, Grant Green. Grant was an appointee under the George W. Bush administration, and was in my view a breath of fresh air following a series of less than effective Under Secretaries. Dick was aware of what I had done on the National Performance Review under the Clinton Administration, and he wanted me to come back and work for Grant to do the same kind of functions for the Bush administration's management improvement program that was known as the President's Management Agenda (PMA). As one might expect, and I say this as a progressive Democrat of long standing, it was quite a bit better organized than the National Performance Review was. It was very highly structured, with quarterly grades being given to each agency, and it was managed by the Office of Management and Budget. This program focused on several areas: personnel, information technology, administration, financial performance, real property management, and rightsizing – meaning ensuring that we had the right number of people in our overseas posts to do the job correctly. It was interesting and engaging, and allowed me to have contact with a number of people in the White House and throughout the Department. I did that for about two years, and felt that most of PMA goals were admirable and worthwhile – with the possible exception of “Competitive Sourcing,” which in practice struck many critics as a fig leaf for outsourcing.

I should note here that after I came back from FSI, I reconnected with another old friend from the early days of the merger of Management Operations and the Comptroller's office – Sid Kaplan. Part of the 2001 reorganization of the FMP Bureau and the whole budgeting function involved having all the pieces of strategic planning come under the same bureau – meaning Management Policy, the State Operations budget, and the International Operations budget. Sid was put in charge of the division of the new Resource Management Bureau (RMA) that was going to do strategic planning. Sid knew what I had done in helping put the process together earlier. He asked me shortly after I came back to the Department from FSI if I would like to come and work for him, and I was very pleased at that prospect. But I had promised Dick Shinnick and Grant Green that I was going to give them at least a couple of years at the PMA job, and so I did that but stayed in close touch with Sid too. So after a couple of years I thought I would take advantage of this opportunity to work for Sid, but I wanted to retire from the Civil Service and work as a contractor if possible. For various family reasons, I wanted to start saving more money than previously. Parvin and I have an autistic grandson, and we eventually concluded that we wanted to build up our savings and investments to leave enough after our death to help take care of him. Long story short, on a Friday early in January 2004 I retired from the Civil Service, left the Office of Management Policy, and went to work the following Monday as a contract consultant in the Office of Strategic and Performance Planning.

*Q: When you are dealing with money and budgets in government it gets to be political, not necessarily Democrat or Republican, but just plain political. How did you find being in this battlefield?*

FAIRCHILD: Challenging I guess is the best word for it. I remember one particular meeting that bears out that point. Ivan Selin was Under Secretary for Management at the time. Ivan was a thoroughly charming person who was also extremely smart, and who was also very perceptive on the political aspects of budgeting. He was a former “whiz kid” in Robert McNamara’s Defense Department, subsequently worked in the old Bureau of the Budget, and founded his own company – American Management Systems. Getting back to the meeting I cited, Rich Greene was then CFO and was making the presentation on his budget recommendations. Ivan reviewed the bottom line after a few questions, and observed, “Well as I read this thing everything is more or less mandatory, and the only thing that is left is this discretionary reserve fund which is 18 million dollars. I guess that is all I really have control over, right?” Rich hemmed and hawed, and then said, “Well yes. That’s about it.” How you sort out the competing priorities is very difficult. Over the years the Comptroller’s office, and then the Bureau of Finance and Management Policy, ran pretty much a “black box” operation when it came to budget formulation. They put the budget together, responding to various pressures within the building as to who needed what and who really needed what, but basically did so with precious little transparency. On reflection, I suspect there may be no other way to do what they had to do within a short time period and with minimal chaos.

There are actually two stages to the budget process. There is the budget formulation stage where you get together with all the end-users, the bureaus, and find out what everybody wants, determine what you think they really need, discuss the current and out-year policy priorities, and then figure out how you can put it all together. So then the Department assembles a budget, which is blessed by the Undersecretary for Management and the Secretary. It then goes then to the Office of Management and Budget, and they of course want to trim it back, so usually they come back with lower numbers. Then OMB assembles what is known as the “President’s budget request,” which is usually done and ready to go by early February. Once the Congress finishes its work with it, you get the actual numbers that you will have for the fiscal year in question; that is your actual appropriation. Then you go into the next stage, what is known as the budget execution phase. The Department then develops what we call the financial plan, that is the doling out of the actual money that we get. It doesn’t always reflect what you asked for because priorities can change as time goes by. So it is a difficult balancing act, and you have got all kinds of people who want more positions here and more positions there. It also relates to ongoing administrative and personnel operations, some of which may be imposed externally, like personnel reduction operations that might be imposed government-wide.

You were talking about Naples earlier. I remember one post-closing exercise when they were discussing the political section in Rome, which tended to reflect more of the 1950’s than the 1990’s. In other words they had at least one political officer for every Italian political party – the Communists, the Fascists, the Christian Democrats, the Radical Party – which I gather was not really radical – and maybe a couple more. In the 1950’s that may have made sense; we had a lot of policy interests and policy worries about Italy then, including worries that the country might

actually go Communist as the result of an election. But those issues were no longer a worry in the 1990's, although the staffing levels in Rome remained about the same.

*Q: Then of course there are always some foreign characters who are starting a revolution or a war somewhere, and that is going to suck in all of your attention.*

FAIRCHILD: Sure, or you suddenly have the implosion of the Soviet empire and the disintegration of the USSR, and you need to open embassies all over Central Asia.

*Q: This brings up a question I wanted to ask. I am not sure where you were but there was a decision on the part of Secretary of State Baker not to ask for more money for embassies in the former Soviet Union, and the funds required were taken out of the blood stream of the European Bureau. This by many people was thought to be a terrible mistake. Were you dealing with any of that?*

FAIRCHILD: Not so much dealing with it, but I was certainly aware of it. I think in fact Secretary Baker did that on the advice of Ivan Selin. He did have a rationale for it, and it may have been a very good rationale – namely to the extent that you have things earmarked by the Congress in your authorization and appropriation your ultimate flexibility in using your final appropriation is greatly reduced. What I think he was afraid of was that they would earmark a huge amount of money for opening those embassies in our authorization, and that we would then in the inevitable budget process have total funds reduced in our appropriation so that we would come up short for other requirements. I also recall that in the following fiscal year the Congress supposedly authorized an extra \$60-\$80 million to cover all of this, but how that actually played out in the budget process I am not sure. If you get that extra in your authorization but don't get that much in the appropriation, and then you have other earmarks that constrict your ability to control use of the total package, it is pretty difficult. I remember a lot of uninformed people talking about that at the time and wondering why the Secretary didn't go for the extra money, but I am reasonably sure that it wasn't just Republican fiscal ideology or the desire to wear a hair shirt that produced that decision.

Getting back to my work in early 2004, it was in the Office of Strategic and Performance Planning. For the first year there I spent most of my time as the coordinator for the State-USAID Joint Policy Council. I frequently felt like a combination choreographer and den mother. This Council was something that the leadership of both agencies wanted, and it served as a forum for working out differences and bypassing cumbersome bureaucratic procedures to achieve better cooperation between the two organizations. There were 12 working groups, six of which were geographically oriented. The other six were functionally focused. The overall chairman for these meetings and for the whole process was Marc Grossman, who at that point had become the Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs. It was good to work with him again, and Marc was a superb at making this thing work well. As you know there has been a sort of love/hate relationship over the years between State and USAID. The Joint Policy Council lasted a bit over a year, but when Secretary Condoleezza Rice came onboard she didn't like the optics of having a joint policy council for anything because in her view was there is only one policy and she was in charge of it. I suspect that the Council and the history that led to its creation were not really explained well to her, or she never bought the argument that this was a useful forum to work out problems in a way that normal procedures between say a geographic bureau in State and its equivalent in USAID were incapable

of doing. So I was asked in my second year in SPP, that would be sometime in 2005, to do the same sort of thing for a relatively new organization called the State-USAID Joint Management Council. This one addressed all of the management issues, administrative things, security, IT as well as shared administrative operations. One of our goals, one of the State goals, was to reduce redundancy as much as possible. We didn't have full cooperation from USAID at the time because I think they were still considerably worried about being absorbed by the Department the way USIA and ACDA were following the arrangement concluded with, or rather demanded by Senator Jesse Helms when he was Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. USAID's leadership, or at least some of them, worried that this might happen to them, and that in the process so they would lose policy control and other elements of control in the administrative area that were important to them. Where the rubber met the road in this regard was in areas like having separate housing pools or separate motor pool operations at overseas posts. Eventually the new Undersecretary for Management, Henrietta Holsman Fore, decided that she wanted to take more direct control of this Joint Management Council and she in effect dealt our office out of the game on this. I can understand bureaucratically why she may have wanted to do that, because the SPP reported to the CFO who – at least according to the CFO Act – has a direct reporting relationship to the Secretary and not her. She gave this Joint Management Council portfolio to the relatively new Office of Rightsizing, which was designed and required by an act of congress to review staffing at overseas posts and bring it in line with what it should be as opposed to what people wanted it to be. I am sure that the Congress when they passed this law saw “rightsizing” to mean downsizing, but we didn't take that approach. We said it may be downsizing or it may be upsizing, depending on policy interests and other requirement in the country in question. Eventually the head of the rightsizing office, Patrick Truhn, came up with an idea that I think made a lot of sense. That was tie these administrative, personnel, housing reforms – especially the ones where we tried to do away with redundancy – to the coming on line of new embassy compounds. The Overseas Buildings Operations Bureau had a regular program to bring all of our embassy compounds up to snuff with regard to security, or build new ones that were secure. This program, incorporated into what OBO called its Long Term Overseas Buildings Plan, came about because of recommendations in the Inman Report that analyzed the failures or problems that led to the horrific effects of the bombings of our embassies in Tanzania and Kenya in 1998. That was rather controversial because in many cases to have a very secure embassy it probably should not be located right downtown, but rather it should be out of town with a minimum of a 100-foot or more setback so that if a bomb goes off you can't get hurt. Consequently where a lot of these embassies were built you can't really do our business easily because they were so secure and away from the city centers. Nevertheless as all of these new embassy compounds came on line these other problems of redundant systems and operations pretty much got sorted out. If you are all in the same compound and in the same place, for example, it doesn't make sense to have separate motor pools or separate housing operations. No one, even the most eloquent members of the USAID old guard, could possibly defend that kind of thing.

Later on when Secretary Rice took over the helm of the Department she asked for and had created an advisory council on transformational diplomacy. It was supposed to look to the future and figure out what we needed to do in terms of personnel recruitment and training, technology and infrastructure changes, bureaucratic structures and relationships, and similar issues. I had the good fortune as part of my assignments in SPP to be assigned to a sub-group of that advisory council. I would say that it was the most important sub-group, and it was known as the State 2025 working

group. The two co-chairs of this group were Dr. Barry Blechman, a founder of the Stimson Center, and Ambassador Tom Pickering. This was not the first time I met Pickering, but the first time I worked with him, and it was pure joy. He is a genuine renaissance man, and when he was Undersecretary for Political Affairs he was the first one in memory to take an interest in management issues – meaning administration, personnel, and all of the areas that most people on the seventh floor happily leave to the person who is sitting in the Undersecretary for Management’s office. He was interested in them and he thought he could make a positive contribution. So I spent a fair amount of time with that group, especially with one of the young men in the office, Rudy Lohmeyer, and we worked together on producing the final report. Rudy was and still is a person of prodigious intellectual ability and an absurdly high level of energy, and I think his departure from the Government to work as an international management consultant was a net loss for the Department. Several of the State 2015 recommendations got implemented almost immediately, but the rest were not greeted with enthusiasm by the new team under Secretary Clinton – perhaps because they were viewed as leftovers from the Bush administration and thus suffered by association. That was a shame in my view, but many of the same ideas were resuscitated later as part of Secretary Clinton’s much vaunted Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review – the QDDR. Sometimes, at least in Washington, old wine tastes better in new bottles.

Toward the end of my assignment in SPP I moved back to where I had started in a sense, that is working on mission performance plans, bureau performance plans, and the related agency-level plans and reports. That was both satisfying and fun because it was like seeing one’s child who has grown up. You knew it as a baby, and then suddenly you have a young adult in front of you. As an aside, however, I believe that planning of the type we managed was never really fully embraced by most people in the Department, or at least by the Foreign Service subculture. The only time it had unambiguous support in the building was when Colin Powell was Secretary. His Deputy, Richard Armitage, used the planning process as a serious management tool and held annual review meetings with every bureau to make sure that they were both “with the program” and making progress. When one knows that one will be grilled shortly by Richard Armitage, it tends to concentrate the mind wonderfully.

That said, I think over time many people came to see the utility of the planning process, especially as the central parts of the government – OMB and the White House – became more demanding about having agencies demonstrate the results of what they are doing, principally by using metrics to measure whether progress is being made or not. And if progress is not being made, demonstrate how the bureau or an agency in question responds – change the program, add more resources, or just cancel the program. I don’t see how we can say to a subcommittee on the Hill, for example, “Hi, I am from the State Department and this is the amount of money we need. So just trust us, give us the money we ask for, and we will use it correctly.” You simply need to make a good, compelling, and provable case for the funds that you request.

One of the other things I enjoyed as my time in the Department drew to a close was being an unofficial mentor in the office for the younger officers who had just started their government careers, whether they were civil servants or Foreign Service officers. It is also good to have a gray beard in the office who can tell you stories about how this sort of thing was tried before, why it

worked or why it didn't work, and how we might learn from that experience as we try to develop and implement new policies.

*Q: Did you find any post or posting early on that you found lots of examples that you drew on, good or bad?*

FAIRCHILD: Well, I think all of them. It is after all one's professional career, and that is a major part of one's life. I think every post had some lessons that either I either learned or chose not to learn. Sometimes those you choose not to learn, and the consequences of doing so, come back and bite you when you are not expecting it. I think I probably made the best contribution as a mentor not in terms of high level policy analyses but rather telling my younger colleagues how the sub-culture worked at State. Here I mean letting them have my views on the things they ought to pay attention to, both in terms of how they do their jobs and how they should construct their career paths – to the extent that one can exercise control over it – and deal with bosses both good and otherwise, and so forth.

*Q: One of the big things in an assignment in Washington early on is whether you can learn the wiring of the State Department, in other words who reports to whom, who is important and who isn't.*

FAIRCHILD: That's right. You also learn who works and who doesn't, and on whom you can rely and on whom you better not rely because they will undoubtedly let you down. It is like the way we approach the efficiency reports we do, the annual employee personnel ratings. They tend to be written, as you know, mostly in superlatives. So it is hard to sort out the wheat from the chaff, unless someone is really bad or totally beyond bureaucratic redemption. That is why you have this phenomenon of the corridor reputation. One of the first things you must do when you know that somebody is interested in a job you have to fill is to call around to your friends and colleagues and find out what the real word on that person is, because you are not going to find it in the official personnel file. At least usually you are not going to find it there – but there are exceptions to every rule, even my rules.

So, as we moved towards the summer of 2011 the Department filled the position of Deputy Secretary for Management. This position had been created and made available to the Department in an earlier bit of legislation, but the Department had not filled it. Tom Nides became the first Deputy Secretary for Management, and he decided among other things that he wanted to “elevate strategic planning in the Department” and pull the management of it into his own office. This change keyed off of a major recommendation in the reform agenda commissioned by Secretary Clinton known as the QDDR that I mentioned earlier. The way Mr. Nides chose to accomplish this was to split up the existing Office of Strategic and Performance Planning, and divide the people between the Office of the Director of Foreign Assistance and the State budget office. Some of the people would then be detailed to the Deputy Secretary's office to oversee the revised strategic planning system. As a result, the Office of Strategic and Performance Planning was scheduled to go out of existence at the end of July. And so that date marked the end of my contractual relationship with the Department, and simultaneously the end of my career just over 45 years – first as an FSO, then a civil servant, and finally as a contract consultant.



*Q: Well looking back on it where are the strengths and weaknesses in the budgetary process?*

FAIRCHILD: I think where it falls apart, at least in the current structure, is there is not enough attention given to longer term planning. I think this latest reorganization has basically made the planning process into the handmaiden of the budget process. That is less than good, and means that your focus is inevitably going to be on the short term. I know you have to put out today's fires and not worry excessively about fires that might get ignited five or six years down the road. But unless you have some sort of coherent long-term vision it is hard if not impossible to do what you need to do today to prepare yourselves for what is going to happen down the road. I don't think there is an easy answer to that question. I suspect the nature of our political process and our budget process is such that it will probably always be that way. Color me pessimistic.

*Q: For the last ten years we have had open a sort of abnormal situation with a war in Afghanistan and a war in Iraq, which for a really a small organization like State is something that absorbs a disproportionate amount of our personnel and money. Then all of a sudden it is over, and how to get back to normal again, whatever stands for normal.*

FAIRCHILD: Right. One of the problems with the Iraq War and the Afghan War, and this is something most people don't think about, was that they were run off budget, and that ran up a huge deficit that wasn't reflected in the national accounts. This is aside from the issue of whether the policy was right to invade Iraq in 2003 or Afghanistan after 9/11/2001. You are also right on the institutional impact on State, especially the personnel impact for example. The need to staff a huge embassy in Baghdad and to staff the needs in Afghanistan literally sucked all the oxygen out of the room. And these situations ended up distorting the whole system, especially when you had Iraq assignments of one year, special allowances, and arrangements whereby those who did tours in Iraq got special preference for ongoing assignments.

I have made a list here of some final comments I'd like to offer them as a reflection on my 45 years as a stalwart at State. They are mostly personal, they don't deal with great policy issues mostly, but I would like to start it off by answering the question "would I do it all again?" The answer is absolutely yes. I think I might do some slightly different fine-tuning of my career, to the extent one could control a career and assignments along the way. I'd like to go back and alter some professional relationships too. I know I could have given more attention to projecting a more engaged image for myself. I think I had more of a cool, analytical frame of mind and a reticent persona that sometimes did seem very impressive when compared to those who are totally and obviously enthusiastic about every element of their current work. I often regarded such people as toadies or at best cheerleader types, but I was wrong to make such a judgment.

Would I have a different geographic focus? Perhaps, but I think there are certain rewards that come from working in the Third World that one can never experience elsewhere. As I've noted previously, I think you can see on a daily basis how you help make a lot of lives a lot better. That may be through the government assistance program you help manage, but a lot of it is just your daily opportunity at a personal level to assist people. I don't mean giving handouts, but helping by giving advice, or maybe helping someone get a job somewhere, or a personal recommendation. It is uniquely rewarding. Also when you serve in the Third World starting early in your career, you suddenly as a junior officer find yourself dealing with ministers in government, and it forces you

to grow professionally a lot more quickly rather than working on student visas M-Z in some big European post or working month after month on some obscure treaty issue somewhere. Also I think it gives you a chance to learn a little bit more about this big world we live in and its diversity rather than serving in a succession of European posts where a lot of the differences between many countries and our own are mostly folkloric rather than basic. I would love to have served in France, but I recognize there are a lot of commonalities between French society and ours. A lot of superficial differences, to be sure. As De Gaulle said “One cannot easily organize a nation that has over 250 different kinds of cheese.” But when you get beyond things like cheese, there are so many things we have in common including outlook, common history, common institutions, even a common sense of our own national exceptionalism. When you get to a place like Central Africa or Afghanistan, however, it is totally different. Societies are structured so much more differently, and the approach to government is very different as well.

As I look back now I realize that one could ask if I had any real coherence in my career. It was sort of here and there, both geographically and functionally. I think in retrospect there is coherence to it, and maybe you have to use a rear view mirror to see that kind of thing. I started off in Africa as a second choice because the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe were in effect off limits for me because of security considerations. When I went to Afghanistan, and I will be quite honest about this, it was more out of intellectual curiosity and due to the accidental fact of having my office in West African Affairs right across the street from the executive office of NEA where I talked to Howard Shaffer and learned about a job in Afghanistan. Even going to Iran, I know the assignment in Iran was more than just odd for a political officer. This was after all a commercial job, but I wanted to go there because I was sure it would help solidify the relatively new family that I had become a part of. My wife was from Iran, and our two children are half Iranian. So while we all enjoyed our time Iran, I don't think it particularly helped my career. I also don't think it hurt my career, and I was very happy for the opportunity to go there. I think I mentioned earlier that the kind of work I was doing was very similar to political work. You go out and talk to people and gather facts and figures in a society where reliable facts and figures just don't exist. As an intellectual analytical operation it was very good. I recognized though that I needed a really good job after Iran. That is why I went for a DCM slot, and obviously my best connections were in the Africa Bureau.

When I started these interviews I was thinking about what should I say about bad bosses, because we have all had them. Fortunately I have only had a few in my career. I won't mention names or places, but I think what characterizes the bad element in these bad bosses were two traits in particular: sycophantic behavior with regard to their own bosses, and a regard for the people they worked with – especially their actual subordinates or those they regarded as their inferiors – of disdain or ill treatment. They simply didn't recognize that you have to do more than manage up; you have to manage down too. I think that was their greatest failing. I remember I was once asked to write the initial testimony for an Undersecretary for Management, and the boss in particular whose name I won't mention asked me to produce a draft. I said, “No, I don't think that is the way to do it. I think we should sit down with the Undersecretary and find out what he wants to emphasize.” This boss actually said, to me “No, we can't do that. That would show that we don't know our job.” I just couldn't believe this reaction. It was beyond absurd, and a stunning revelation of this man's insecurities. I also remember once at an overseas post I had gone to do a trip up country and came back a little earlier because my boss had instructed me to spend some

time talking to the locals in places like tea houses. Well, the locals in question spoke one of the country's two major languages – not however the one I had been trained for. So my boss got upset that I had come back early, and said something like, “Well maybe we need to talk to the ambassador about this problem.” I didn't immediately realize what the problem was, but I quickly figured out that he thought I was insubordinate. Feeling irate at being treated as a child and not wishing to be so easily intimidated, I said, “Maybe we should, and while we're there maybe we should also find out what the ambassador thinks of his head of the political section who doesn't even know that the particular part of the country to which I was sent to chat up the locals speaks one language only – and not the one that I know.” Such comments give one a feel-good moment, but clearly don't help one get the kind of annual personnel appraisal report that outlines one's strengths.

I guess my other comment would be another about another boss who was a DCM overseas. I think he had a very narrow focus on State, and he just didn't seem to appreciate the role of other agencies played in the larger foreign policy context. I remember his making some very disparaging comments about USIA AMPARTS, American participants. These were experts in a particular field that USIA found overseas, usually in Europe, and asked them to do some speaking engagements beyond Europe that would be of use and thus cost less money than sending them from the U.S. One day when I was the Embassy's duty officer and was in his office, this particular DCM said, “We have too damn many of these AMPARTS.” Such insufferable ignorance might have had some resonance in places like Paris or London, where we have generations of cultural, societal, and governmental relationships and don't particularly need government-sponsored speakers to establish new relationships. But a comment like that in a country like Iran or Afghanistan, where those relations are either new, or weak, or none-existent is simply stupid. So I think that is another quality of bad bosses, intellectual shortsightedness...or simple but invincible ignorance. I remember reading once about a Portuguese proverb that “God writes straight with crooked lines.” I think that may be true, even though I no longer believe in Divine Providence, and I think these manifestly bad bosses finish by coming to a sad end as far as their careers go. You just can't be a bad boss and expect to do well at the end of it all in the Foreign Service, unless of course you have an incredibly powerful patron or extraordinary luck. At least that has been my experience.

I have had lots of good bosses too, and have appreciated working for them and have learned a lot working for them. I was just thinking of them now, and with great affection. Joe Cheevers, who was my first boss in the Foreign Service in Dakar in the consular section. I often say and ardently believe that he was the most civilized boss I ever had in the last 45 years. Dean Brown was also wonderful; he was tough...tough as nails, but he certainly taught me lots of lessons. Bill Edmondson was my boss in Washington in the Africa section of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (CU), and was always helpful afterward. John Richardson, a political appointee under Nixon who ran CU, was a wonderful man, a great boss, and a mentor whom I will always cherish. Goody Cooke, my ambassador in the Central African Republic, had just experienced being DCM for a not so great ambassador. He was very careful to treat me the way he wanted people to treat him earlier. Art Tienken, when I was in personnel doing assignments, was another great boss – even if we called him, affectionately, Billy Goat Gruff. Dick Bogosian, my last overseas boss was Ambassador in Niamey when I was DCM, is also high on my list of favorite bosses and good friends. George Moose, whom I met earlier and who became my boss in the Office of Management Policy, was another excellent boss. His deputy, who eventually took over

the office, was Ed Dillery, a great colleague and wonderful friend. Grant Green, as Undersecretary for Management, was – I can't decide whether Grant was head and shoulders above the others in a long string of Under Secretaries for Management, or whether he looked so wonderful because he was such a normal, pragmatic, and well balanced person who took his job seriously. Grant was very straightforward with people. I learned early on when he asked your opinion and you gave it to him straight, you should always make sure that you say it in such a way that he won't get on the phone right afterwards and call up the person you said is not doing a good job because Grant trusted you implicitly and completely. When I made suggestions, I knew that probably within 15 minutes after I left the office he was going to be on the phone. Last but certainly not least, I have to give kudos my boss Sid Kaplan who was my boss for the last 6 ½ years when I was a contract consultant. We are still very good friends, and still in touch. Sid was, until he retired at the end of last year, the most senior financial management officer in the Foreign Service, and a man of many parts. He knew much more than the budget business, and kept well informed on all policy issues. We will see each frequently in the future when my wife and I will join him to go to the Washington National Opera, a passion that we share...despite the WNO's less than great staging of recent years.

You asked earlier about Israel, and I have referred briefly to the Israeli-Palestinian set of issues briefly in my earlier remarks. I would like to record my view that the post-1967 American position toward these issues, which has almost always been uncritically and reflexively supportive of whatever Israeli government is in place, has worked against America's best interests in the world. It has ironically also worked against what I think are the best long-term interests of the Israeli people, most of whom I suspect want peace and a peaceful future as much as Palestinians do. The ongoing "peace process" must seem like a cruel hoax to most Palestinians; what we need is more peace and less process. The influence of the so-called Israel Lobby in the U.S. has been a major contributor to this unfortunate situation, one that not only hamstring U.S. foreign policy but also debilitates our domestic political processes. The Israel Lobby is real, and I have personally witnessed its regular and heavy-handed influence in foreign affairs from my earliest days in the Department – even from my limited perspective while working on African issues. Our knee-jerk support for Israeli policies in the occupied territories and their recent military actions against Lebanon and Gaza have earned us the ire of the entire Muslim Middle East, obviously, but also of heavily Muslim states in Asia and of other peoples around the world who both know history and have some sense of justice. And when I say Israel Lobby I don't mean just the America-Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), but also the Zionist Organization of America, the Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations, foreign affairs spin-off groups like the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, and related organizations that attempt to police attitudes in the media (like FLAME) and on American university campuses (like the network of Professor Richard Pipes). All of these organizations try to equate any critical comment about the Israeli government with anti-Semitism, and I fear far too many Americans have bought this bogus bill of goods over the years. Another bill of goods is the old canard that Palestine was "a land without people for a people without land." There were people there, and they were the Palestinian Arabs, but every year they have less and less land to call their own. I also believe that if one wishes to learn what's really going on in the Middle East one should read the Israeli newspaper Haaretz online and watch Al-Jazeera on television, as opposed to relying on the New York Times and CNN. And instead of paying undue attention to Israeli politicians like the odious former Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman, we should pay more attention to and support people of good will and friends of justice

like Uri Avnery. I won't belabor this point any more, but if readers of these memoirs would like to read informative and objective works on this subject I recommend they start with The Israel Lobby by Professors Walt and Mearsheimer as well as Peter Beinart's recent book The Crisis of Zionism.

These 45 years have been great fun, mostly. I really enjoyed this career, but I should record one serious negative that I believe still clouds what could otherwise be a positive hindsight view of a Foreign Service career. Never over the course of my career, and especially at the end of it, has any element of the State Department expressed any gratitude for the years of uncompensated service my wife has given her adopted country overseas and here at home as the spouse of a Foreign Service Officer. We all know what spouses go through – managing an official residence, acting as cook and household manager, giving up other career possibilities, even occasionally suffering maternal anguish as the children fly off to a boarding school thousands of miles away from one's Foreign Service home in the middle of the Third World. The Department, or rather the Bureau of Personnel, finally came around to implementing a farewell reception on the 8<sup>th</sup> Floor for retirees as a mark of gratitude for their years of service. But when I received an invitation to the reception in the year following my retirement from the Foreign Service, the invitation package noted that “if you have a spouse she/he is also welcome to attend the reception” – or words to that effect. Is it any wonder that my wife's reaction to this at best clumsy note was to say that she never wants to set foot in the Department of State ever again?

But on balance, I suppose most things do improve with time – even in the Foreign Service. I remember, however, in the early 1970's, we were allowed to see that secret part of the personnel evaluation report that they used to write – until some court decision or some enlightened souls at the helm of the Department discontinued the practice. This was one that was written in Dakar, and in that secret section they always had to have a criticism. In mine there were two critical notes, the first of which was something like “Mr. Fairchild speaks with a discernable Southern accent, but it is not an unpleasant one.” I was stunned that the writer saw fit to make such an unenlightened remark, one that I thought spoke more critically about the writer than about me. The second critical note said something like this: “Mr. Fairchild is sometimes given to enthusiasms.” I know that was written as a criticism, but I preferred to take it as a compliment...and still do. When it comes to having enthusiasms I hope I always have them, because when I cease to you can bury me. I am both happy and grateful that I was able to combine a career of public service with enjoying life and having fun. They don't always go together for many people.

*Q: Well I want to thank you very much. This has been quite a journey.*

FAIRCHILD: Well thank you, Stu. I appreciate your walking me through the past 45 years.

*End of interview*