

## CHAD

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**FREDERIC L. CHAPIN**  
**Chargé d’Affaires**  
**Ft. Lamy (1961-1962)**

*Ambassador Frederic L. Chapin joined the Foreign Service in 1952. His career included posts in Austria, Nicaragua, Brazil, El Salvador, and ambassadorships to Ethiopia and Guatemala. Ambassador Chapin was interviewed by Ambassador Horace G. Torbert in 1989.*

*Q: Well, let me sort of develop a little bit more the actual political, economic situation on the ground when you found it there. Chad later, as you know, became a rather controversial problem in Africa because of a variety of things which I hope we can touch on later. When you arrived there, you had President Tombalbaye who was in firm control, but were there other elements that you could already detect that were likely to cause differences, or whatever?*

CHAPIN: The country is divided essentially between the populous lower third, which is Sara and Bantu, not the normal concept of the Bantus as rather short, but that group of Africans which stretch across the entire continent who are tall and muscular and rather thin. That group dominated, and that's where Tombalbaye had developed his independence party.

In the north, covering a large area, were the Arab and partially Arab groups, there were other tribes some of them were listed as white, who came under Muslim influence. The Muslims came down in that part of Africa up to the line where the tse tse fly reigned. The tse tse fly killed off the Arab horses, and at that point it was clearly demarcated as to where the Muslim Sara boundary lay. It lay right along the line of the extension of the tse tse fly. In terms of population, the Arabs and the Northerners, who now dominate the Chadian government, were a small minority, but there was always a group of them in the government, and Tombalbaye had a number of them, including his second Foreign Minister, during my time there, who were Northern Muslims.

*Q: As events proved later, the Libyans had a role to play in Chad. Were they evident at the time that you arrived?*

CHAPIN: There was a Libyan Consul who eventually came to call on me as charge', and eventually I was the Dean of the small Diplomatic Corps. That was virtually the American mission at one time, because the French representative was found to have interfered with local politics when somebody came over the wall of his compound and found one of his safes open

and managed to read some documents about his support to opposition leaders to Tombalbaye. So he was declared persona non grata, and I became Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, and the Libyan came to call on me. We maintained correct relations, but he was always a rather aloof and mysterious force in the country and very active of course with the Arab northerners.

*Q: At that point in time Qadhafi was not yet in power?*

CHAPIN: No, he was not, by no stretch of the imagination.

*Q: And therefore the Libyan attitude towards Chad may have been very different from what it was today?*

CHAPIN: Well, they always had an interest in the Northern part of Chad which they believed was part of their territory. The border from their point of view was not properly demarcated and there has never been agreement as to where that boundary should be. There was at that time; although it has not resulted in anything concrete, there was at that time great speculation that there might be petroleum resources up in the northern part of Chad, directly below outcroppings in Libya.

*Q: Some of the better known names in more recent history of Chad were such as Goukouni, Hassen Hsabr . Were those people there and were they active when you first started?*

CHAPIN: No, none of those people were known to me. There is an age difference, of course. Tombalbaye was just over forty in 1961 and by African standards someone over forty is an old man, and as I said the Foreign Minister was twenty-nine. I don't know off-hand because I haven't followed Chadian affairs, but I think that all the people that you mentioned are considerably younger. I happened to be in Fort Lamy in 1984 on an inspection trip, and I did find that my old friend the Foreign Minister was still alive, but he was said to be ga-ga at the age of fifty odd years.

I did see and talk to one minister who had been the Minister of Finance who was still a minister at that time, Djidingar. I believe that the one Supreme Court justice who had been around, that had been Minister of Justice, was also somewhere in the country, although I didn't see him.

*Q: Tell me a little bit about the French impact, about the French influence. It was the French who gave up The Chad so that it could become independent, they would have rather stayed to an extent. Tell me a bit more about it?*

CHAPIN: Indeed, there were three thousand French in Fort Lamy, of whom about half were military. They had a big airbase and an extraordinarily long runway which was used for civilian purposes, and there was also a military portion adjacent to that. It was part of the lifeline for France going down to their atomic testing sites in the Indian Ocean, and the regular French military flights went through there.

The Chad had always been very dear to General De Gaulle because the Chadians were prominent in the liberation of Paris, the Chadians - both French and Chadians - went north and attacked

successfully at Bir Hakim in Libya, and then they were given the honor of leading the French forces into Paris for the liberation of Paris. The French maintained a garrison of Infanterie de la Marine; they are not really like our Marines, but they are somewhat similar to those troops. They were an elite corps in Fort Lamy; it was not the Foreign Legion and so they had a substantial military presence and they dominated the school system.

The French had advisors to all the cabinet members who really did all their work, and only the President and a few of his ministers, Touragaba, the first Foreign Minister, were really able to deal on an international level.

*Q: I take it that Tombalbaye and his government was accessible? You had no problem with seeing them?*

CHAPIN: I had no problem whatsoever and often saw the President. We negotiated the economic aid program for the Chad, and the Ambassador came back from one of his trips abroad, and actually was present to sign the various agreements, but it had all been negotiated with the President and to the end referred to me as Monsieur l' Ambassadeur.

*Q: Were there any other countries represented at the time?*

CHAPIN: As I said, at one time the French high representative was declared persona non grata and we were the only ones. The Egyptians sent in a charge' who stayed for a few months, found it totally boring, too hot, and decamped and went back. The Sudanese sent somebody over from time to time: the West Germans eventually set up a mission, but that was after my time. They were there temporarily on and off on visiting missions. The British Ambassador who was responsible for all of Equatorial Africa and a large part of Africa toured through there. We even had an Australian ambassador come through, but very few people decided to set up a permanent representation. The Israelis were among the first to decide to do so, but they were just getting themselves installed, as I was leaving in July of 1962.

*Q: This is side two of my discussion with Ambassador Frederic Chapin of his situation in The Chad. I would like to ask him about Chadian perceptions of the United States?*

CHAPIN: Chadians really had no perception of the United States. One of the first indications of this that I had was with the Secretary to the President of the short lived National Assembly of Chad. He was a young man who had come from, was a son of one of the chieftains in the western part of Chad. We got to be rather good friends, we had lunch together and we talked about his aspirations and about the possibilities of some kind of representative government. Representative government had been snuffed out very early in my period in Chad. About a month and a half after I arrived, the National Assembly had been sent packing, and the staff had remained. He said to me, "You know you are the first European that I have been able to talk to," but I knew what he meant. I said, "I'm not a European, I come from an entirely different continent." What he had meant to tell me was that I was the first white with whom he had had any contact. For Chadians, whites were French, and Americans were some kind of concept which was beyond them because they had very little education, and very little understanding of geography.

*Q: Did the Chadians even know that the United States even existed when you were there?*

CHAPIN: President Tombalbaye certainly knew the United States existed and where it was, but it was very difficult to explain to him when we had problems with Cuba, what Cuba was and why Cuba was significant to the United States, as it was only a little island off a great continent of America and the United States. That was a formidable task.

*Q: Did the French ever give you any problems?*

CHAPIN: No, not really. When we were negotiating the aid program, the French had been so used to telling the Chadians what they would receive, I had to set up a procedure by which we could negotiate our own aid program. I suggested that the Secretary General of the Government be appointed as my interlocutor in these negotiations. When he came into the big cabinet room which was a huge room with a large mahogany table with forty seats around it, I had been there and was seated at one side of the table. The Secretary General came in, and I stood up, and he sat down immediately next to me. The room was otherwise filled with French advisors, and so we began to discuss the projects which had in advance all been cleared with the French advisors.

The French in their usual way, which I had previously experienced at NATO, began by saying "We agree in principle, but we have to edit these remarks a little bit, or these projects a little bit." Each one began to edit in a different style of French, some nineteenth century, some twentieth century, some even eighteenth century French. Their changes and corrections were all to the French texts - we had parallel columns in French and in English, they weren't interested in the English - they were only interested in the French which had been translated by our French-British secretary. I was glad to take all of their changes, as long as they didn't alter the sense of the English.

So the Chadians looked at this procedure and they watched how all this went forward. The next thing that happened, there were a couple of objections by the Ministry of Finance representative, a Frenchman, that Chad was not going to give privileges and immunities to any of the AID personnel that we might send there. I asked that this issue be reserved, and there were one or two other technical problems, and then I proposed to the Secretary General that we should have a "petite comité", or a reserved small group in which we could discuss these small disagreed items. I suggested that we meet in his office, which in due course we did, and the representative of the Finance Ministry was there and the meeting went along pretty well. I had known the representative of the Finance Ministry quite well and he said "Well there is a problem, there is an inconsistency in this document which is presented." I said "Yes, I am well aware of this inconsistency, I have telegraphed my government for corrections on this point."

The Chadians were absolutely amazed to see two white people disagreeing with one another, but civilly, over substance. We resolved most of the questions, but the issue of privileges and immunities was not reconciled. I said to the Secretary General, "I request that this issue be referred to the President, and I suggest that I have a meeting with the President to see whether we can resolve these issues. Meanwhile, I'm getting instructions." In fact, this was carried out, and the President and I met and resolved the few remaining issues, and I had the President sign the first one of our project agreements. Thus we taught the Chadians how to negotiate.

When we got to the signing ceremony for the aid agreement, the same Chadian Secretary General came to that meeting, and when we produced a small communique' which might be published by the official gazette of the Chadian government, the Secretary General said, "Oh we agree with everything in principle, but we have to edit it." So he proceeded to edit relatively good French into impossible Chadian French, and it was so published. They learned that the way to negotiate is to edit!

*Q: While you were there did AID that is ICA, but it used to be what we call today Agency for International Development. Did they finally send people while you were still there?*

CHAPIN: There was nobody permanently there I think, before I left. Their mission came and proposed a program, and wrote a report. I had to go down to Leopoldville to see the assistant ICA administrator, and I came up with an entirely different set of projects which could be implemented and filled in the spaces that the French could not take care of, and which were particularly appropriate because we had the skills and the knowledge to do them. They were very simple things. For example, we have very good date palms in California. The date is recommended by Mohammed as a particularly proper and nutritional food and is indeed a great nutritional food. While the pilgrims coming back from the journey to Mecca had brought back some cuttings of date palms and had planted some date palms in the few oases that there are in Chad, those palms had not been very fruitful. So, the program that we developed was to drop cuttings from California date palms by air in bags on the oases. We needed a delivery system and the low altitude drops do not damage the cuttings.

Similarly, the second most predominant Chadian export was the hides from the Chadian cattle, and these hides were going to Nigeria. They were only getting half the value of the hides because they were improperly dried and badly cut, so we had a program of establishing seven concrete slabs in regional areas where cattle were being slaughtered. We would then train people to use rotary knives to cut the hides so that they did not tear the hides, and to have proper drying sheds.

Sorghum is the basic diet food of Chad and we have sorghum in the United States, and we developed a program for hybrid sorghum. These were very simple things, the total program including the cost to the people and the training was less than one million dollars per year. This kind of program was carried out for several years after I left.

*Q: Thinking back now twenty-five years later or more than that, what are your favorite memories of Chad?*

CHAPIN: My favorite memories are of working with the Chadians and the French to develop an aid program which made sense. While very modest in financial terms, it was very technologically sound, it wasn't high technology, it was low technology. When I arrived in the Chad, seven years before, they had not had a single pair of yoked oxen. While the wheel was known, the wheel was known only in terms of the wheels that were driving French trucks that were operating on the roads, and the private cars.

One of our projects was to increase the use of yoked oxen, and increase the use of the wheel, because even when I was there, there were only thirteen pair of yoked oxen in a country of three million people! They were planting cotton, which represented ninety percent of their exports, with pointed sticks. They had no plows, and plows were not likely to be introduced very shortly. At least yoked oxen could be used to carry cotton or other heavy items from one point to another. It was a very simple basic economy, it was a stone-age economy, when I was there, other than what the French had.

*Q: I'm afraid as you know that Chad has become a rather controversial country since you left. Could you detect seeds of that problem, the Libyan problem, the north and the south problem while you were there.*

CHAPIN: You could always detect that Libyan imperialism was prevalent in terms of the northern areas that I had mentioned before. How much of Chad the Libyans thought was theirs was a matter of dispute. The seeds of disagreements between the Muslims in the north and the Sara in the south were clearly there.

The present government, which has been very successful in curbing or turning out the incursions of the Libyans, has, I think, left under-represented the Sara majority of the population which lives in the south.

*Q: One last question on Chad. You commented much earlier that you had taken care of reporting on economic problems or whatever. Could you comment a little further on that? As I recall you did five reports.*

CHAPIN: I prepared one report on the five industries, all of them quite small. One report was quite sufficient to cover the entire limited industrial base of the country. I'm told by someone that recently came back that there are only four industries operating today.

**WALTER J. SILVA**  
**Administrative Officer**  
**Ft. Lamy (1961-1963)**

*Walter J. Silva was born in Massachusetts in 1925. After serving in the United States Army from 1943-1945 he received his bachelor's degree from Harvard University in 1949. His career has included positions in Dakar, Panama City, Maracaibo, Beirut, Thessaloniki, Athens, Rome, and Naples. Mr. Silva was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1995.*

SILVA: I had a friend in Admin. who worked for William Crockett. This guy was Number two or number three, he had been the Admin. Counselor in Beirut, Adrian Middleton. He was a wonderful fellow, a good friend. One day we were at his house and he mentioned that they were going to open all these new embassies in Africa, and I really ought to get the hell out of INR because that was a dead end. So I said, sure, I'd like to go to Africa and open an Embassy. And

the next thing I knew, maybe a day later, I got a call from Crockett's office. I was convoked, and at the same time Dick Moose was there too escaping from whatever assignment he had. I forget who the other officers were. There were four embassies being opened, including the Republic of Chad. They were all opening at the same time. Crockett, seemed a friendly guy, nice guy, and he said: "You go out there and open these embassies. Here's the regulations, read them, but just get it done no matter what the regulations say. Screw it all, get the place open, do what you've gotta do!" So I took off with my briefcase containing most of the FAM, and the famous one-time pad, the coding system at the time, which of course was highly classified. I had my Royal portable typewriter and a package containing the American Embassy seal and an American flag. When I landed at Fort Lamy I was met by the chief of protocol and a small band played appropriate music, which I think they thought was our national anthem but it sounded like anything but. And I was escorted to the hotel, which was later destroyed during one of many rebellious outbreaks in the city and has since been rebuilt.

I had been assured that though we were taking this classification system with us, there would be no classified messages except in the direst of emergencies. It was going to be unlikely as hell. And then in the middle of the night I got a long classified telegram about Fidel Castro, who was going to speak to the UNGA. This was '61, something like that. There was an expectation that he might make anti-American statements. We were beginning to realize he was not the friendly agrarian revolutionary that we had hoped. So the Department wanted all diplomatic posts to approach their respective chiefs of state to enlist their support for the United States in whatever came out of the Castro visit. It was a long telegram, full of talking points, and of course I had to spend the night decoding this thing with my one-time pad. And I typed up a note, a foreign office note, on plain old paper with my Royal typewriter in pretty good French-- it wasn't great, but it was probably better than the chief of state's French.

First thing in the morning I called up the Presidency, the government house, formerly the residence of the French governor general. The President of the country was then Francois Tombalbaye, the first president of independent Chad. He had been a moniteur of the school system and one of the most highly educated men in the country. He had gone, I guess, through the equivalent of elementary school and was licensed as a moniteur, which I guess was a grade or two below a teacher. Reputedly the best educated in the country. (That made good copy but in fact there were other Chadians of equal or superior education. He was a decent sort of a fellow, in a way. But anyway, to my surprise, he answered the phone. The country was so newly independent that every minister, and there were about 30 ministers, had a Frenchman at his shoulder to keep things going the way they wanted them going. Of course in the presidency as well; he had no real power. He had plenty of time to answer his own phone, why not? I told him that I had a demarche to make to his government and he said, "Come right away. Come on." I guess it was his first demarche. So I leaped into our newly rented Peugeot 404 and drove over there with my briefcase, which to a great extent was the Embassy. I had the seal up and the flag was flying, but everything else was in that briefcase. I drove to the Presidency where Tombalbaye met me on the stairs and ushered me into what I guessed was the state dining room, now the meeting place of the cabinet. And all of the ministers were there, every one of the thirty or so. Dressed variously. It was nine o'clock in the morning. The foreign minister was about 22 years old, the son of a prime chief in the eastern part of the country. He was dressed in a tuxedo. But others had long white gowns or business suits or kaffiyahs, you name it, they were all



dressed more or less in a way to identify their region of the country. The Chad was ethnically diverse to say the least. I announced that I had this message to deliver from my government, the President said "s'il vous plait." They all sat down and listened attentively. I don't think any of them was completely ignorant of French, but real French, even American college level French was a cut above most of them. Anyway, I read off this long thing that I had laboriously decoded and translated, and finished up and they were all very attentive, I might almost say, rapt. I ventured, "If you've got any questions I'd be happy to answer them." No one said anything. Finally one of them piped up, I think it was the foreign minister, and said: "M. Silva, Cuba, qu'est que c'est?" I realized that they hadn't understood much of what I said. They heard the word Cuba in there, which sounded foreign, and they asked "What is that?" And I answered, "It's a country." The next question was "Where is this country?" So I opened up my briefcase, and I had what every foreign service officer needs, a National Geographic map of the world. It's only about 2x3 feet or so. I laid it on the table and they all huddled around. Someone observed: "Voilà, l'Afrique!" And another voice suggested "Oui, ici le Chad!" They were having a good time looking at the map. "Now Cuba, where's this Cuba?" the President asked. So I pointed to Cuba. Florida is ½ inch long on this map; Cuba is a mere speck. I pointed to Cuba and said, "That's the island of Cuba, the country of Cuba." And the President said "Oh, c'est petite, tres petite. Si ca vous gene, pourquoi pas la prendre?" If that bothers you, why don't you just take it! A direct and simple solution. Of course when I reported it the desk though I was kidding. And when it did come to a vote in the UNGA, the Chad followed the French lead. It was a fascinating post. In the first year I was there...

*Q: You were there from 1961 to 1963?*

SILVA: Yes, almost three years actually, I don't think anyone's served that long there since. Anyway, it was then still very colonial; it was still being subsidized by the French and is even now, so the French had a good deal to say about national policies. In those first years the French were everywhere, in every office. If you wanted to know what was going on you really had to ask the French.

*Q: I heard one of our people say that you used to call up, "Laissez moi parler avec le blanc."*

SILVA: That is certainly apocryphal. I never did and I don't think any one at the post did. In any event in that post-independence period, you ended up talking to "le blanc" willy-nilly. Outside the capital you still had the prefects running things and they were all white, and those who ran the gendarmerie were all white. Some were brutes, some of them were impossible. I went down to a major town in the south which was the center and capital of the cotton growing area of the country. Of course, they had no business growing cotton. Cotton exhausts the soil like few other plants do and the soil there was already poor, a savannah. And yet the French had them grow cotton because they wanted the country to develop some sort of independent agricultural enterprise to make the country a going concern. So when the cotton culture was at its height, cotton from the Chad delivered to Brazzaville was more expensive than Egyptian cotton delivered to Paris.

So they grew cotton. I'm told, I wasn't there at the time, that in the first few years of the culture of cotton it was done under the whip. It was done by levying labor from the village. They were

marched out to the fields to hoe and plant and cultivate and weed the cotton, and then pick it -- under the whip, literally, with overseers. Reminiscent of the old South. They always had trouble with labor, they had to pay them and in the beginning they paid them once a week, very little, but they had to pay them. And the minute the natives would earn enough to buy a t-shirt or pair of shorts and sunglasses and maybe a Bic pen, they'd never see them again. They'd leave the village and go to Fort Lamy, to escape the levy. They were treated, well, the French have a way of sometimes treating native peoples very badly. It was not a happy situation. One prefect I recall had a perimeter fence built around his funny little square cinder block building, it looked like a tiny fortress. The fence was wired, electrified. There were times when the supplicants who came to see the prefect for licenses and permits and various kinds of things they needed, would line up in great numbers and lean against the fence. The prefect would throw the switch, give them a good jolt. He thought that was very, very funny. Typical of the prevailing attitude among the French "colons." You can see that what's happened since has some relationship to French management in that period. The French had closest relations with the people of the south: what agriculture there was in the south, the political leadership, to the extent that there was any, came from the south. The south tended to be Christian, some animists, but they were not Muslims. In the north they were Muslims, and the French seemed to think of Muslims as the enemy then. In the north they had a camel corps called the "Meharists." They were military, paramilitary if you like, the police of the desert. They wore all white gowns, white turbans, and red leather trappings, gun belts, whatever. They were very striking, and they rode camels. They had units of about 19 or 20 men on camels and each unit was run by a French gendarme, usually a sergeant. I suspect that at times they weren't even noncoms, they were just gendarmes. I was told then that most of the gendarmes were police who had screwed up somewhere and were shipped off to the colonies to repent. The Chad was no longer a colony, but it was still, after independence, being used that way. The troops of the Meharist corps, were recruited from prisons in Chad, they were murderers, rapists, people of the worst kind who ended up in jail. And the way they got out of jail was to volunteer for this corps, where they had a long period of service, ten or twelve years, whatever it was, but it was better than prison. Now they served only in the northern desert of the country and had for a very long time, going back to the 1920s, to the time of the "pacification of the Chad" and the establishment of Fort Lamy. In fact they were part of the continuing French pacification program, and they were there to prevent the piracy of outlaw bands who preyed on caravans. After patrols of months in length, they came into Fort Lamy once a year, and camped across the street from where we lived. They were no trouble. When my six year old son's curiosity got the best of him and my wife took him over to look at the camels the troops were delighted. They gave him camel rides and made over him in ways calculated to spoil him completely. They were gentle but their scarred faces testified to the brutalities of the colonial system. It was easy to see the roots of the sort of thing that is going on now in France and in Algeria.

*Q: We're talking about the problem of fundamental Islam in Algeria.*

SILVA: Although the French had been involved in Muslim countries, Morocco, Algeria, their slice of black Africa, I don't believe they were ever comfortable in dealing with those peoples except from a position of superiority. Definitely the French did not like this increasing Muslim occupation of Chad. The French sent troops to counter the Libyan intrusions into Chad and they probably would again.

*Q: Well, in the time we're talking about, between 1961-63, what did you gather were American interests in the area?*

SILVA: None. We didn't belong there. Except as a contact with a member of the United Nations, a country with a UN vote. Certainly we had no commercial or trade interests there. It was a tiny Embassy then, three officers.

*Q: What was the Embassy like?*

SILVA: Well, we eventually got an Ambassador. He was later, I heard, cashiered from his next post for sexual misbehavior. The DCM/Political/Economic officer was Fred Chapin. He arrived six months after I did. Then I was the rest: Admin, Consular, USIS, etc. Eventually USIS turned up with two officers and a library and I thought that was an exaggeration. We were already as large as we needed to be to do the little work that needed to be done. We were instructed at one point to devise a suitable AID program that would cost, if I recall, about \$250,000. We discussed it with the Chadian. They would have liked a steel mill, or an automobile factory. Eventually they settled for a flourmill. An absurd idea since the wheat was imported. But AID got its foot in the door. The dispatched a program officer to the Chad, he did nothing for a year. After I left the office started to grow. (When I was back there a couple of years ago, AID well outnumbered the rest of the mission and "ran" a piddling little program that could have been operated from another post, or even Washington.)

Much of what we in the Embassy did back then wasn't taken seriously. The early reports out of the Embassy, were not taken seriously, including one saying that the president lived in fear that he would be murdered by black magic. Still the man was scared. Though ostensibly a Christian, Tombalbaye continued to maintain his animist beliefs. The Desk didn't understand. I think now they may, now that we've had more experience in Africa they may be beginning to understand. But at the time I don't think there was a lot of interest. There were occasional messages about international organizations and once the Organization for African Unity got established there may have been messages dealing with what we would like them to do. A waste. At least during my three years there, there was always the Frenchman in the background making the decisions.

*Q: So they were doing it according to French politics...*

SILVA: When it came, for example, to the vote at the UN that I had a small part in, France abstained. Chad abstained. Even though the President said "We'll do exactly what you want. This guy (Castro) is outrageous, he's got a little country that doesn't exactly deserve to exist." But in the end, they abstained, which is what France did. So at least in those three years in terms of influencing the government, it would have been better influencing them from Paris than from Fort Lamy.

*Q: Just to get a little feel for the Foreign Service side of things, not to dwell on personalities, but personalities are important too. I know there were problems of many of these small African posts because Europeanists were brought in to make them Ambassadors. These were people who had been Political Counselors or Ambassadors in the European countries, totally unfit. At that point*

*it was a place really for the young, full of adventure, full of piss and vinegar and all that. And you'd bring these rather sedate, urbanized people in and they weren't very good. And I think we've changed that over a period of time, but how did you...was that a problem?*

SILVA: Oh yes, absolutely. There were four new embassies, as I said, four new chiefs of mission. The Chad, the Central African Republic, Benin and another I don't recall at the moment. I heard the four Ambassadors referred to as Briggs' boys. They had all served with Ambassador Ellis Briggs in, I believe, Korea. Briggs had a lot of clout in the Department and was taking care of his boys. So they got their embassies at about the same time that Briggs finally retired. It was sort of his farewell gift to his boys. I don't think any of them knew the least thing about Africa and none of them had a real interest in Africa. They used to meet quarterly at each other's embassies, a rotation. I don't think that our little Ambassador ever did anything, ever! He may have met with Tombalbaye two or three times, more social than anything else. Fred Chapin used to see the guy who was foreign minister finally. An impressive guy named Toura Gaba. He got a little independent though, was later arrested and thrown into a pit in the old fortress of Faya Largeau where he died of starvation. He was an anti-white African, very anti-white. He used to see Chapin, but it was mostly to ridicule Chapin and ridicule us. He was not a source of useful information, if we needed information. You could still learn more in Paris than in Port Lamy.

Q: *Was there any concern about Soviet penetration at that time?*

SILVA: No, if there was any concern about penetration it was about penetration of the Muslims. That was a big concern of the French and of our Embassy. That is, it was obvious that they were growing...it was like the encroachment of the desert. You could measure it year by year. I remember reports that Islam had moved another 10 or 20 or 50 miles south, along with the sand.

Q: *Well, did we see Islam as being a nationalistic, anti-American force?*

SILVA: Yes and no. It was a foreign force. Then, I think, probably correctly, it was seen as a kind of destabilizing fifth column primarily coming from the Sudan into black Africa. It was not seen as in the best interest of the Chad, and not in our interest (or the West's interest) as well. The Libyan thing came much later.

**MICHAEL B. SMITH**  
**FSO General**  
**Ft. Lamy (1962-1964)**

*Ambassador Michael B. Smith was born in Massachusetts in 1936. He received a bachelor's degree from Harvard University in 1958. His Foreign Service career included positions in Chad, France, and Iran. This interview was conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy on August 25, 1993.*

Q: *Could you first give us a sketch of what the situation was like? We're talking of the period from 1962 to 1964. Where was Chad and what was going on?*

SMITH: Chad wasn't doing anything. Chad sits in the middle of Africa, slightly above the armpit [of Africa], which Douala, in Cameroon, was affectionately known as. Chad was totally isolated and landlocked. Fort Lamy was about 2,000 miles from the nearest ocean. I guess Lagos or Port Harcourt [Nigeria] were the nearest ports.

Chad is about twice the size of Texas. The northern half is dry, arid, and Arabic. The southern half is sort of a savanna. The people there are either Christian or animist. The Arab population in the North is not black but swarthy. The people of the South are black and tribal. Fort Lamy was the biggest town, with a population of about 88,000. Then there were places like Fort Archambault and Moundou, and other places whose names I can't remember--totally under the control of the French.

The French ran the country. They sat behind the phones, so to speak. Everybody felt that with this "rushed" independence we had to establish embassies in each of these godforsaken holes. This was a huge mistake, in my view. Not because the people didn't deserve independence, but we couldn't do anything [for them]. We spread our resources all over the place. We should have been involved in multilateral cooperation from the start, rather than having our own aid program, and our own this and that. But that's another story.

We arrived there in September, 1962, right in the middle of the rainy season--hot and humid. The airport looked like something out of a Sydney Greenstreet movie of the 1930's. Whitewashed buildings, red mud all over the place.

We had a two-year-old daughter by that time. We stayed at the Ambassador's residence for a week. The Ambassador was John C. ("Arch") Calhoun, a bachelor. That showed in other ways, and morale was not the best as a result. It was a mistake to send a bachelor to a post where we were sending married people with kids. A bachelor doesn't quite understand some of the anxieties. Then we moved into our own house.

What was it like? It was exciting. Here we were in the middle of nowhere. By comparison with Tehran, this was really the Foreign Service. Or it may have been the Foreign Legion! [Laughter] We were not quite sure what the hell we were doing, in a sense. The French ran the place. We were trying to insert our way into it and give the Chadians a couple of alternatives or options. I'm not sure the Chadians understood that they didn't have to be quite so dominated by the French. We were naive, and particularly the Ambassador. He'd write back to Washington and send these PRIORITY or IMMEDIATE cables about some godforsaken mayor who was ousted in some godforsaken city or town. The only person who would give a damn was the guy on the desk [in the Department].

When I subsequently went back to Washington and worked in the Operations Center [of the Department], I found out how low the priority of Chad was.

So the Ambassador was a big fish in a small pond. He had to "buy American," so he had to have an American car. The only car that would work was a Checker Cab. The Ambassador's limousine was a Checker Cab, because it could use parts interchangeably--Ford, Chrysler, or General

Motors. Our office was in an old store, which we had leased. It was a supermarket with arcades and things like that. It was the most inefficient building that I ever saw.

We had a gem of an Administrative Officer named Walt Silver.

*Q: All right, there were all these things you were doing. But what were we doing in Chad?*

SMITH: Beats the hell out of me.

*Q: How did we work with the Chadians?*

SMITH: With difficulty. For example, we had an AID officer, Joe Ciudano, or something like that. Of course, he had to have his own secretary and his own house, and stuff like that. So out of the \$1.0 million AID budget, \$600,000 was spent on feeding and caring for Joe. The one project I remember was one called "Date Palm Suckers." It took two years to get a "Date Palm Sucker" program going. The forms that had to be filled out! That's when I saw how totally futile USAID was. I've been turned off on AID ever since--and that was in 1963. It was the most incredible, boondoggle bureaucracy I ever saw in my life. Joe was a nice guy, but My God! The infrastructure this one AID officer carried. He had to have a secretary. Then, because the Mission got so big, we had to bring in a doctor and a nurse. So we really had tails wagging the dogs.

We never had more than three, substantive officers in that Mission--the Ambassador, the DCM, and myself.

But, responding to your original question, what were we doing in Chad? We never knew. Most of us, except the Ambassador, thought this was folly. Reddington didn't like blacks. He was uncomfortable just being there. There were blacks on our staff. The USIS guy, John Russell, was a black. His replacement was a black. One of our code clerks was a black. They all said, "What the hell are we doing here? What are we trying to do? We don't have any money--or at most peanuts. We can't, by any means, counter the French." Nine-tenths of the staff didn't speak French. Reddington and I were the only ones who spoke French--had been trained in French. Orville Silva was bilingual. He spoke French, Italian, Spanish, and so forth. Ambassador Brewster Morris came down to Chad from Berlin. He and Ambassador Calhoun switched places. They were old friends. Morris didn't speak a word of French. What the hell did they come to Chad for?

I just loved Chad, but we never knew what we were doing there. We couldn't compete with the French. The French had more people in the Information Service in their Embassy than we did in the entire Mission. And we had the second largest Mission there.

The British were smart. They accredited one ambassador to three or four countries in Africa. The Israelis had a Mission there. It was interesting to see how the Israelis were trying to stem Islam, or Arabism from coming down into Black Africa.

*Q: What did you think of their efforts?*

SMITH: They were very effective. They went right to the core, to the youth of the country. They organized the young people and properly inculcated them. The Israelis were very successful as long as President Tombalbaye was there. Then there was sort of a pro-Arab takeover, and the Israelis left the country. It was interesting. American missionaries had been there since 1922--in the South of the country. Talk about stories of heroism. Forget what they were doing. How these missionaries survived boggles the mind. They had the only medical school, the only medical hospital at a time when the French were not doing anything. These American missionaries were down there, caring for the weak.

If you want to see ideologies clash, you could see it in this sense. It was religious ideologies. You could see what the Judeo-Christian tradition was up against--in Chad, of all places. The proselytizers for Islam would come down from Sudan and parts Northeast of there. What did they do with these heathens? They would say, "If you would pray just five times a day, toward Mecca, we promise you beautiful women, beautiful oases, beautiful food," and all of that. They converted these people by the thousands.

The Christian missionaries--and even the Israelis, but particularly the Christians--were trying to tell these people how they were going to have to save their souls and taught the doctrine of salvation. You know, educated people don't accept this. Here they were trying to speak to people who had no education. Let's see. We were there in 1962. In 40 years they had made 40,000 converts, or 1,000 a year. Not too bad, except that the Muslims were converting them by the thousands, every day! You could see what was going to happen. The Arab influence was going to take over the animists.

*Q: What was your evaluation of President Tombalbaye?*

SMITH: He was a good man. Here he was, thrust into the office of the President. He looked like a President and carried himself like a President. He was probably corrupt, but certainly no more than any other tribal leader would have been. He was not dumb. You could see his tribal origins. He had scars on his face. He seemed to be kindly enough, from the contacts we had with him. But national leaders didn't mean anything to most Chadians. Most Chadians lived away from Fort Lamy. There were 3.5 million Chadians, and only 88,000 of them lived in Fort Lamy. There were nomads and other groups. Tombalbaye's tribe won. He came from Southern Chad, from around Fort Archambault. I'm sure that he'd been involved in the usual infighting and all that sort of thing. I'm sure this infighting was brutal.

Well, we were trying to apply Western standards. That's a big mistake. All of these African countries were mistakes. The boundaries were decided in the 1880's between the British and the French over some green covered table. The borders were as artificial as could be. We knew it and just didn't have the courage to say so. The reality was that a lot of these African countries were never--and by "never," I mean within the foreseeable future--going to "make it" economically. My own view was that what we were doing was raising expectations which could not be fulfilled, over the short term. That was a mistake.

Now, someone may say, "You mean that you should leave them in their Eden-like situation and not worry about their health and so forth?" I know you shouldn't, but, on the other hand, in Chad, which, as I said, is twice the size of Texas, the only natural resource which they had was "Natron," a low-grade salt. They mined it from the Chari River. The French tried to introduce the cultivation of cotton. They grew cotton--but at three times the world price. So cotton production was totally subsidized.

What was sad about it was that the "donor" nations didn't all get together until late in the game. They didn't say that we've got to get together on projects which cut across borders, and so forth, if these people are going to have any "economic future" the way we view an economic future. I can tell you that 90 percent of the Chadians couldn't have cared less. They had no connection with this. They didn't even know what independence was.

What we were doing politically was zero, in terms of the impact on the world, let alone Africa. We didn't need any political officers there. If we needed anything, we needed a "lean and mean" AID Mission, if you wanted to do that. We could have done it all, looking at this situation in hindsight, by having a multilateral AID organization. A really good one, not one made up of Indians and Pakistanis who were trying to get a free ride in life. A sincere program, using the aquifers and the natural water system of the Chadian Basin, turning Chad into the agricultural bread basket of the rest of Africa. We could have done that, but the situation was all tied up in ideology, independence, freedom from colonialism, and all that. I wouldn't go so far as to say that breaking away from colonialism was a mistake. It was close to that, but that wasn't an option.

**ROBERT J. MACALISTER**  
**Peace Corps**  
**Chad (1965-1968)**

*Robert J. MacAlister was born and raised in the New York City area. He studied history at Bard College. It was at Bard that he became interested in foreign affairs while working at the State Department. In addition, he served in the Peace Corps. He worked in the Ivory Coast, Zaire, Chad, and Senegal. He was interviewed by W. Haven North on August 14, 1995.*

MACALISTER: Soon after that, Jack Vaughn called me in and asked me if I would go to Chad. It was as a pinch hitter, but I like to cite the situation without citing any names because I think it is important in terms of understanding what kind of people you need in international development. The man who had been named as the first Peace Corps Director to Chad was a doctor of internal medicine. His wife was a pediatrician. They were practicing medicine in a very well-off suburban community, so for them to take an assignment with the Peace Corps represented a tremendous financial sacrifice. But they went off to do it because they believed in the Peace Corps.



However, it turned out that, for a number of reasons, my predecessor in Chad was not successful. To the contrary, the volunteers were in an uproar. I think his primary problem was his attitude and approach to the volunteers. He was used to being in the position of authority-of being a doctor and giving orders. Here you had a group of young people with minds of their own. The only time he went to visit them was when he flew in on a plane. In any event, it's another example of the importance of understanding the people with whom you're working, particularly if you're in a leadership position. We did get the program back on track in Chad.

*Q: The program again there was mostly English teaching?*

MACALISTER: No, no. That was the minority program. One of the problems in Chad, in addition to this guy just not being suited to this kind of work, was that the programming there (in AID parlance the "project identification") had been lousy. We had twenty volunteers on the shores of Lake Chad. These volunteers were supposed to be introducing oxen-drawn agriculture. The land was magnificent. You had polder land reclaimed from Lake Chad which was tremendously rich. But there had been no decent project identification. The host country entity, in which the volunteers were supposed to work, wasn't functional, etc, etc. So in addition to everything else, you had twenty young people sitting around growing more and more sour without enough to do. And this guy did not move to rectify the situation.

My Peace Corps experience in Chad served to reinforce my conviction that specific projects have to be well thought through. You can train Peace Corps volunteers appropriately, but, if you don't have a well organized project, you cannot be successful.

In Chad an opportunity to do something constructive with AID developed. As I mentioned earlier, we had these volunteers who were supposed to be involved with animal drawn agriculture and that didn't work out. Consequently, we had some people who needed jobs. At this time, I was approached by an AID engineer who had developed a system which involved sending water through a pipe to drill down to the water table and then install hand pumps. He had the technology, but didn't have the agents to install it so we (Peace Corps and AID) worked together. I am pleased to say that I left Chad in 1968 and, when I returned in 1976, the system was still running. I am also glad to note that the Peace Corps finally overcame its arrogance of not being willing to work with other agencies and now cooperates regularly with AID.

*Q: Let's talk about Chad and the situation you faced there.*

MACALISTER: Well, it was good preparation for later being the Director in Zaire. When traveling, you had to have your own survival system in place. You had to bring water, food, fuel and spare tires with you everywhere you went. It was a tough country to exist in. But in terms of the morale of the volunteers, it was better than the Ivory Coast since they weren't caught in a vice of having to work with the French. The French were well represented in the Ministries, in the city but not many of them were stationed in the countryside.

*Q: What were the volunteers doing?*

MACALISTER: They were working with animal drawn agriculture, water pump installation, some teachers and some health educators. We also had a medical team that was involved with in-service retraining of Chadian medical personnel- a physician, several nurses, two or three lab technicians. They visited district hospitals or their equivalent to perform in-service training. We had one or two nurses who taught at the nursing school in Fort Lane. Then there were two lab technicians assigned to an oasis in the Sahara Desert working at the local hospital.

*Q: What was the relationship with the Chadian officials?*

MACALISTER: I found the Chadian officials, generally speaking, much easier to deal with than the Ivorienne officials. I would say they were less *complex*-more at ease in the sense of being Chadians. I still ran into the French in the capital, and particularly with our medical team, because one of the principal officials in the Ministry of Health was a colonel in the French army.

*Q: You were working on a task force for the development of the Sahel program and then....*

MACALISTER: Then after that, I was asked to go to Chad where the bilateral program was just starting up again after a period of regionalism.

*Q: What does that mean? Elaborate a little on that.*

MACALISTER: As I recall, there was a document called the Korry Report, issued in the late 60s or early 70s, with the theme that AID should cut back on the bilateral missions and develop regional programs. For instance, there were some regional programs for the Sahel run out of Dakar. The idea was that way you could save personnel and some money too, I guess. Then came the Sahel drought emergency and the Congressional approval of the Sahel Development Program. Accordingly, bilateral missions were reestablished in the Sahelian countries. I served as chief of party or team leader for a couple of design teams in Chad. The major effort was an integrated rural development project. The design took several months because it was a large effort. I worked very closely with a man by the name of John Lundgren, who was assigned to open up the mission in Chad.

*Q: What were the characteristics of this project? You were still a contractor at this point?*

MACALISTER: Yes, that's right. Well, I must say I haven't looked at the documents we produced lately, but, as I recall, we produced a Project Identification Paper- a document which represented a step before the Project Paper-I forget what that was called, and as I recall the team and myself also got involved with the Project Paper. And it was a good learning lesson for me of how AID actually operates. As I recall, John Lundgren's priority was to have a large, comprehensive project. At that time,-REDSO/West Africa was very involved in the review process and Miles Wedeman was the Director. Miles had a good deal to say about whether the project paper was approved. At that time, AID/Chad was still subject to REDSO/West Africa. It developed that the project got shot down when it got to the Project Paper stage. As I look back on it now, I realize that John Lundgren was way ahead of what Miles Wedeman was going to buy.

Q: *What was the issue, do you know?*

MACALISTER: One was just the sheer size of the effort. And I suspect Miles Wedeman's concern was one of absorptive capacity. We had not been working in Chad on a bilateral basis and the Chadian Government has always been thin in terms of personnel resources. There was a lot of rural extension activity. I haven't looked at it lately, but my overall recollection is that he [Wedeman] felt we were trying to do too much, too quickly, and expecting too much of the Chadian government.

Q: *So what happened to the project eventually?*

MACALISTER: It got shot down. It didn't go. That was it. Subsequently, the Peace Corps asked me to go to Zaire and fill-in as Director. Then I became a direct hire person with AID in '79.

**JULIUS W. WALKER, JR.**  
**Deputy Chief of Mission**  
**N'Djamena (1966-1969)**

*Ambassador Julius W. Walker, Jr. was born February 21, 1927 in Plainview, Texas. After serving in the United States Marine Corps, he received his bachelor's degree from The University of Texas. His career has included positions in Malta, Burundi, Chad, England, Liberia and Upper Volta. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1992.*

We went out in November 1966. Got there just before Thanksgiving and found a large number of problems in the mission. One was in the relationship between the embassy and the Peace Corps. The Peace Corps had just started up. There had been a Peace Corps unit in Chad for almost a year and a half. The PC director was an MD as was his wife. They had four children. They had volunteered as Peace Corps doctors then he was asked if he would be country director in Chad. He took the job. He was a nice looking guy, nice looking wife and good looking children. His name was Rentch. The wife and the wife of the Ambassador did not hit it off. There were a number of other problems. Sam Rentch was not really a good administrator. He was a good man, but the fact that you are a good doctor and man really doesn't mean that you are a good administrator. He wasn't.

He made a number of errors dealing with PCVs. There was tremendous dissension among the Volunteers. He got no real help, I am sorry to say, from the Ambassador. The Ambassador sided with the volunteers totally. Had I arrived earlier, I might have kept at least a few of the problems from coming up. But I didn't get there earlier. When I got there and it was too late to do anything.

The embassy was also in something of a shambles. Not only had the DCM been evacuated with hepatitis, when we arrived there were four other active cases of hepatitis in the mission and the wife of the Ambassador came down with it soon after. Morale was not good. It was difficult to do very much of anything.

*Q: What was the Ambassador's background?*

WALKER: He was a Europeanist and had mainly dealt in German affairs. I heard he had been offered two other missions in Africa before Chad. With the Chad offer he was told it would be the last offer. He could forget about a chief of mission assignment anywhere. So I think he took it somewhat against his will. But I will say this for him, in his relations with the government and with the people he did a very good job. He was known and respected. He traveled a great deal. His wife always went with him. They learned a little bit of Sara, one of the country languages.

In the public relations field and out of the embassy they were very good. He didn't have good relations with the French Ambassador. I can't hold that against him because nobody else had good relations with him either. But the wife of the French Ambassador and the American Ambassador's wife were known to be at one another's throats.

He was autocratic in the office and people found it a difficult situation. He also had an eye for some of the young women on the staff and they complained to me. complaints. I couldn't do much about that either. In those days nobody had heard of sexual harassment.

He was offered the job of deputy chief of mission in Berlin which meant that he would be chief of the Berlin operation. Subsequent to a command of a general who visited from time to time, he was in charge in Berlin. He left in January. We were still in temporary quarters at that point. Before he left he asked me to move into the embassy residence as a replacement for him had not been named. He felt it would be better to have somebody living in that house and keeping the staff busy and occupied than to leave it empty. He was right. Furthermore, we didn't have a place to live and it looked as if it would be a while before we could get something. We moved, got rid of the place we were living in temporarily and saved money on a lease.

I mention that because a couple of years ago I was asked to go back to Chad on temporary duty to run the mission. Since the sixties there had been a lot of problems in Chad. The chancery was destroyed in a civil war and the residence has become the chancery. I found that my office, the Ambassador's office, was what had been the Ambassador's bedroom. I thought about writing a piece for the Foreign Service State Magazine with the heading: The Ambassador Doesn't Sleep Here--Any More. They took a beautiful residence and made it into one of the ugliest chanceries I have ever seen. They were trying to improve it and did make it look a bit better while I was there the last time.

The hours of work at the embassy were interesting. In Foreign Service we are to work 40 hours a week and we are also to be open for business when the host government is. In Chad the government went to work at 8:00 and worked until 1:00 six days a week. They didn't come back in the afternoon, it was too hot. The temperature at N'Djamena, or Fort Lamy as it was then, can run above 120 degrees. And even in the cool season it can get over 100. Those were good hours for them, but they weren't quite enough for us. I think we went to work about 7:00 and worked until about 2:00 and then on Saturdays we went in at 8:00 and worked until 1:00 to make the 40 hour week. We were supposed to rest in the afternoons, but as it is with all Foreign Service posts, we would have lunch, a little siesta and then go back into the office and be there until sundown.

Sundown, of course, in the tropics is different from here. The sun comes up and goes down. You have light and fifteen minutes later you have darkness. There is very little sunset.

Anyway, I found time during this period to read to the girls all of the Oz books written by L. Frank Baum. I would read a bit of each one with a girl under each arm in the afternoons before going back to work. It meant I didn't get much of a nap but we had a lot of fun with old L. Frank.

*Q: How did you deal with the Peace Corps situation?*

WALKER: That problem was rough. The volunteers came to town and set up a rump meeting at which they presented demands. Rentch dealt with that as best he could. He was neither articulate nor pliable. I talked to the Peace Corps leaders to assure them things would get better, would change and the Embassy would take what role it could. Remember, this was the beginning of the Peace Corps and at that time Peace Corps wanted to be completely separate and apart from official Americans, to have nothing to do with them. "We are the Peace Corps, we are something different," was their idea. So it was difficult to work with them.

About that time, Peace Corps Washington sent out a fellow to see what the situation was. He arrived and I talked to him for a long time and told him I felt I could work with Sam and help him to get the problem taken care of. I thought he had agreed to let me do this. After he left he sent a cable from Cairo, or some place, he wasn't back in Washington, saying Rentch was to leave and to leave in just a few days and the deputy would be in charge until a new director could arrive. I felt bad about this. I understand the combined medical practice the Rentchs gave up to come into the Peace Corps brought in more than \$150,000 a year.

*Q: In those days that was a lot of money.*

WALKER: Yes. That was when as a Foreign Service officer of class 3 I was making about \$18,000-20,000. So you can imagine how much this was. They were dedicated to the Peace Corps, they wanted to help. This was a blow to their dignity, their pride, their self esteem that I felt was unwarranted. They didn't have much longer to go, only about six months before he was to be transferred anyway. They could have been allowed to stay that long. We could have worked around the problems. We were close to finding solutions to most of them anyway. Sam was simply reading the regulations too strictly and was trying to deal with the volunteers as though they were a bunch of children. They were young people, granted, but they were adults and they had to be dealt with in that manner. To me it was a tragedy the Rentchs had to go. But it was one of those things.

I dealt a great deal with the government there. I was Chargé for about nine months before Sheldon B. Vance came out as Ambassador. Sheldon had been a Europeanist mainly, but during his time in Belgium he worked in large measure with the Belgian Congo. He visited there and other places in Africa. He became one of the first members of the new African Bureau and was deputy chief of mission in Addis Ababa before arriving in Chad, so he had a real Africanist approach. He was superb. An outstanding ambassador in every way. He dealt beautifully with the government and with the problems we had in the mission.

We had fun working with Sheldon. Savannah and I were on home leave in Texas when the phone rang. It was John Blane, the desk officer for Chad. He said, "Julius, we can get a state visit for President Francois Tombalbaye, but we have to send a projected visit schedule to the White House within the hour." He said, "Can you help me put the program together?" I said, "I sure can." I said, "He will have three days in Washington and then bring him to Texas. Send him to Hemisphere," (a big celebration underway in San Antonio). "After that to Texas Tech University. They are starting a school there called the International Center for Arid and Semi-arid Land Studies. It ought to be working with Chad. After that we will send him to Arizona where he can see even more country that looks like Chad." We put the visit together in fifteen minutes. John got it typed up and over to the White House and that was the visit.

Tombalbaye went to all those places. When he came to Tech it was autumn, they had a brand-new football stadium and he was there on Saturday. A game was scheduled and he was the guest of honor. The party was in VIP boxes at the top of the stadium. They wore the ten gallon hats they had just been given. As they walked to their seats the band struck up the Chad national anthem. It was an outstanding 280 piece university band. I understand that tears ran down President Tombalbaye's face. He had never heard his national anthem played with such verve and precision. It was painful the way it was played in Chad. The band there was small and could barely play it.

Then the student section, which was across from his box, held up the colored pieces of cardboard and made a flag of Chad, made it wave, and then made the greeting *Bienvenue à Texas* President Tombalbaye...all in French. He had a wonderful time out there.

*Q: What were the Soviets doing in Chad during this period of time in the sixties?*

WALKER: The main thing they were doing was student exchanges mainly for Lumumba University. They also spent an inordinate amount of time getting themselves organized. I didn't feel the US was quite as klutzy as we sometimes seemed when saw what the Soviets were doing. But student scholarships was the main thing they did.

*Q: What was your impression of how the scholarships took when the students came back? Were they building up a pro-Soviet cadre or not?*

WALKER: There were some who came back who were pro-Soviet, but the vast majority weren't. Most wanted to establish themselves as independent of the Soviets. They wanted to come to things at the American embassy, or any Western embassy. They didn't want to be looked on as stooges of the Soviets. I think most of them felt a little inferior about the education they had received. Some spoke to me and said being in the USSR had been difficult for them. In the Soviet Union they were treated like second class citizens at best. They knew it was because of the color of their skin. They said the officials in the Soviet Union had not supported them. They felt their education, although probably as good as the Soviet Union could give, was not what they would have gotten had they gone to a German, French, American or British university. But they had this experience and they used it.

There is one thing about it, there were very few who wanted to remain in the Soviet Union, whereas it was often difficult getting them out of France, the US, or Great Britain.

*Q: What were American interests in Chad during this period?*

WALKER: As was the case elsewhere in Africa, American interests were in a stable economy, a society that was developing into an informed electorate. We wanted to see a democratic, if possible, type of government there. We had very few other interests. It has come about now in later years that there are economic interests in Chad that are quite great. There is at least one very large oil field there, another one that is important but smaller, and the probability is others will be discovered.

*Q: What about Libya? Was Libya playing much of a role, because later on Libya played a major role?*

WALKER: It was pre-Qadhafi when I was there. Idris was still king. The Libyan embassy was next to the American embassy. The latter is now the American AID mission and the Libyan embassy is still next door. The Libyan Ambassador was an interesting person. He spoke North African Arabic, but couldn't speak Chadian Arabic. He spoke no French, the official language but did speak some Italian. Thus he needed an interpreter everywhere he went. The rest of us got by on our fractured French. In those days we got along quite well with the Libyans.

The main interests that Libya and Chad shared were their frontier and the people there who very freely passed across it. Their relationship was quite good at that point. Qadhafi took over in September of 1969, the month after I left Chad. Things changed.

WALKER: Oh, he had many lines on his cheeks and on his forehead. They had been quite prominent at one point and he had them reduced somewhat, but they were still there. He had been a school teacher. While I was there he was a good administrator and was pretty well in control of things. People said he began to slip mentally not long after I left and he went down hill rapidly. There were those who said this was due to syphilis and it could have been, I don't know. But there does seem to be justification for saying that he was mentally ill. When I was there he didn't exhibit any of this. He didn't have paranoia. He had not gone into the program of having all of his administrators go through the tribal rituals of entry into manhood, trying to take them back to their roots. Several died during this process. It was a hard time for them all.

He was quite sane and effective during the time I was there. He was a little amusing. He called me on the telephone several times but never had anyone call for him. The phone would ring, I would pick it up and the voice would say, "It is me. (C'est moi-meme.)" The first time that happened I came within an inch of saying, "And who in the hell is me?" I'm glad I didn't. Each time Tombalbaye did that he wanted me to come talk with him and did not want anyone else there. That made things a little difficult. It meant I had to make my own notes and report the conversation myself. I didn't have the benefit of a reporter with me to remember those things I failed to remember. I liked Tombalbaye. I thought he was a good man. He had started life as a school teacher, had gotten into politics as a young man, and grown as he added responsibilities.

**KEITH L. WAUCHOPE**  
**Political/Economic Officer**  
**Fort Lamy (1968-1971)**

*Ambassador Wauchope was born and raised in New York, graduated from Johns Hopkins University and, after a tour in the US Army in Vietnam, in 1966 joined the Foreign Service. His specialty being African affairs, Mr. Wauchope served in a number of African posts, including Ft. Lamy, Asmara, Bamako and Monrovia. In 1989 he was appointed Ambassador to Gabon, where he served from 1989-1992. In his several Washington assignments Ambassador Wauchope dealt with personnel, cultural, Latin American affairs and Sudan affairs. Ambassador Wauchope was interviewed by Stuart Kennedy in 2002.*

*Q: We're talking about the French conspiracy theory. Ours is that there's a vacuum and we've got to do something about it and this is almost reflex of action putting this in and doing this without any real overall plan outside of we've got to cover all these countries?*

WAUCHOPE: I would say that's not inaccurate. I think that it certainly started from a reactive approach to the communist countries' presence. Why did we need to monitor all these small African countries? Now, we did have a small agency presence there as well and, beyond our efforts to influence attitudes of the host government vis-à-vis to support our positions in the international organizations, we also hoped to pick up possible defectors from the Soviet bloc countries. Agency presence in Africa was, in their minds, fairly clear. There were opportunities that might not exist, and probably didn't exist in Europe, where the Soviets and bloc types were much more closely monitored. We were also caught up in the concepts of development means stability; we viewed ourselves as engaged in fighting on the frontiers of freedom. That development was the key to economic security, and from that, you would see changes in their political structure. This would lead to a more representative government, once you have economic security, then you have the incentive and the time to start thinking about your political structure. After the wave of independence in the early 1960s, AID, in its wisdom, decided to target just one of a group of ten countries, and, as you know AID's strategy toward Africa shifted over time. It began by trying to have a presence everywhere, and assist in specific areas health, education and rural development. Then AID realized that certain of these tasks should be done by the host government and it decided to concentrate in the most promising countries. There were ten focus countries, the tenth being Nigeria. Nigeria, with its oil wealth decided that they didn't want to accept the strictures that Americans attach to assistance, so it opted out. Of course Chad wasn't one of the remaining nine. AID had a marginal program, but it arranged for a beefed up special self-help fund and we were able to do a fair amount of useful projects with that. I was the self-help officer. One of the better projects was to assist an Israeli lieutenant colonel with the Israeli Mission there. Chad had diplomatic ties with Israel despite the Muslim influence in the north. The Israelis were also very selective in its assistance, specializing in security and reforestation. This lieutenant colonel had a background in reforestation as he had been sent by his government to the southeastern part of Israel and told, "Here are 60,000 acres.



find something productive to do with it.” He decided to start a forestry industry. As I understand it, the area is a center of forestry to this day. He was certain he could do the same in Chad which was losing its forest at a shocking rate annually. He asked for some assistance from us as well as from several U.N. agencies. He asked that we provide him a small bulldozer, a CAT D6 I think it was? We made the arrangements which seemed to take forever. I got to know this guy, Lt Col Hatuel, and to see how he did business. He was a real operator. He was given a small plot of land near the airport and he set up a nursery. The first year he put in 60,000 seedlings. He was able to do so because he had a food for work program with the United Nations. The U.N. was always late in its deliveries, and he would sign his name for food from U.N. other projects to be repaid when his food arrived. He signed for everything with the Chadian government and aid agencies, and he got away with it. From 60,000 seedlings the first year, he had 300,000 seedlings the second year. He had found an old fuel tank from an old airplane to water the seedlings in the nursery. He later found a tank truck. cleaned it out and put it up on pilings then used it to water the plants. He was just unstoppable. I was very, very impressed with what he accomplished. He got his bulldozer eventually.

The problem with all development is follow-through. There’s got to be sustainability built into the projects. While Hatuel got his 300,000 seedlings started, and then distributed them, it became a matter of keeping the goats from eating them. It was at this phase that things began to fall apart. In fact one of my favorite AID stories was about a German aid project in the southwestern part of Chad which we visited, Ambassador Todman and I visited. The idea was to set up a hog growing operation by teaching animal husbandry. They required the Prefect of that region to provide candidates for the training. They would arrive with their wives and families. This was a two-year training “stage,” and they were assigned housing and would grow their own crops to sustain themselves. They’d learn the science of breeding and raising pigs. If they were successful, and there was a substantial dropout rate. At the end of the training, the trainees would be given a sow and a boar, the payoff for their efforts, and went back to their home village where they would raise their pigs. Given that they were not Muslims, they were more than happy to have the pigs; they loved pork as a meal. The Germans completed the cycle and eventually they learned what happened. Well, what do Africans do when you’ve been away for two years? They have a party. And what do you serve at the party? They served the two pigs that were supposed to start their herd. The Germans finally figured this out. They’d been there about five years when we visited their facilities. There were stainless steel counters in the most backward part of the boonies in Chad, and here was this fantastic facility they’d built. They had decided to pull the plug on the project because, despite their best efforts, this cycle was happening over and over again. There was no dissemination of knowledge for this industry at all. They were very dispirited, but this is how you learn your lessons in development.

*Q: I’m wondering talking about the Peace Corps. Were we asking ourselves why are we teaching in Francophone area, why don’t we teach you people English?*

WAUCHOPE: Right. Well, it’s a fair question. We felt, with some justice, that there was an interest in learning more about the United States, and English was a mechanism to help them do that and also offered the possibility that they could study in the U. S. There were some scholarships and scholarship assistance available to them. We’d help them contact colleges and universities. We just generally thought that that was the wave of the future and they would be

better off having a knowledge of English.

*Q: Well, of course, this being even at that time was rapidly English was becoming sort of the commercial, the international language much to the dismay of the French.*

WAUCHOPE: Right. Absolutely. Because the French language is the foundation of Francophonie, the French essence, the French mindset, if you will. There was a fair amount of intellectual debate at that time, and Senghor's concepts of negritude were actively debated. The French were perpetuating this debate. They would organize these conferences; this is the days when de Gaulle was agitating in Quebec.

*Q: Well, we're talking about the influence of France and you're talking about, what did they call these, the young?*

WAUCHOPE: Cooperantes, not unlike our Peace Corps.

*Q: Cooperantes. We're talking about you got there in '69. The May and June of '68 were the great period for particularly this class of people. I mean these are the young students, the student revolt and they essentially knocked de Gaulle out. I mean it took a little while, but I mean was that spirit of it was in a way their Vietnam. It was part of the '60s of what was going on. Was that hitting them or did it have anything to do with it?*

WAUCHOPE: Yes. Right. Well, it did. As I say, they were very sophisticated, quite cynical people and I sensed that they took some pride in the fact that they were able to bring down de Gaulle, but they also felt that, very quickly thereafter, politics returned to the way they were. There was a transition and they felt that the waves have just swept back over what they had done. Pompidou did not have the stature de Gaulle had, but the young leftists felt they were back where we started. That's why they were disinclined to discuss their own country's problems because they felt that France had again fallen under the control of the rightist coalition. They weren't really full of fire. My sense was that their commitment to Chad and the Third World was pretty uneven. I had a sense that they were just doing their time. This was the same period that Vietnam was going hot and heavy. The Tet Offensive had taken place and the U.S. had a substantial number of forces still engaged in Vietnam. So Peace Corps volunteers were looking at their options, and several were re-enlisting for a third year in Chad. I visited the volunteers in eastern Chad and it was pretty rough. I'd been in Vietnam and their circumstances were much worse than Vietnam would have been. Granted they wouldn't have to shoot anybody or be shot at, I suppose, but in terms of what they went through in order to avoid the possibility of the draft. This seemed was pretty extraordinary to me.

One of the most successful Peace Corps programs we had a program of well drilling, and I think this ought to be recorded. We had teams of well drillers who were supported by the government of Chad and also by certain international organizations. I think the U.N. had some input as well. These teams did extraordinary work and they left something valuable behind. The need for potable water is paramount, and the world is always in deficit which was certainly the case in Chad. They would go in with their trucks, drills and pipe, and they would put in a well with no fanfare. The pumps were simple to operate and maintain. Sometimes they would do open-faced

wells and they'd line them with cinder block. Some of the young men, and I think it was only all men, went on to positions of great responsibility in the U.S. government after that experience.

*Q: Talking about wells, I've heard that one problem was as you began to develop these well areas and all this it began to change the migratory pattern of herders which was an unfortunate problem. It means that they all gather and they're not moving from one spot to another and all sorts of bad things happened.*

WAUCHOPE: Yes. This happens. It didn't really happen in this project because we were doing these wells in the south where the sedentary peoples were. So, it didn't change the patterns. The watering stations that we set up with Self Help funds along the main cattle route had marginal success to be candid about it, but the cattle were channeled the terminus in Fort Lamy where they were slaughtered for local consumption and export. I know of the case in Mauritania where USAID became involved in exploiting and expanding the traditional watering holes. Of course, they immediately attracted more herders with their herds and they soon used them up and the watering holes became useless. Then the herders had to move again, and now you had more people in movement depending on fewer and fewer watering holes. That's true; it does tend to change things in that Saharan or upper Sahelian region. In the sedentary areas, wells were a more permanent improvement.

*Q: While you were there, this is before the Sahelian drought came during the '70s wasn't it?*

WAUCHOPE: Yes, '73 to '75.

*Q: Were you hearing the people on our side or anyone else saying, you know, this whole thing is [inaudible] and you know, we better watch out. What happens on the next thing? I mean were people looking ahead towards that or not?*

WAUCHOPE: Not really. Everybody knew how important the rains were and in Sahelian Africa. I later served in Mali as well, and these people live and die by the rainfall. They gauge the "petites pluies" that start in March in those cases and they gauge how long they last and how heavy they are. Then, from that they hypothesize what the main rainy season is going to be like, and based on that, they make their decisions. The sedentary people make planting decisions, and herders make decisions about moving their cattle to new pasture lands based on those brief rains. The Sahelian people are more knowledgeable than others about rain prediction. Our development people viewed this as a permanent problem and realized that there were constraints on what donors could do about it. Not only because they could not control the rain, but they realized that were limits as to where the government can allow the herders to move their cattle without provoking major ethnic conflicts. If the herders enter farmers' lands, their cattle will soon spread out and there will be clashes, as occurred from time to time when I served in both Chad and Mali. Thank God, neither group was very heavily armed, so it didn't lead to many people losing their lives. Another constraint on the movement of herds was that below the 13th parallel the cattle would become infected tsetse flies and would die and their meat was putrefied. In view of these constraints, donors looked for reliable sources of water like the Niger River to the west of Chad and Lake Chad. Unfortunately Chad's water resources are mostly on the westernmost border and in the southern half of the country.

*Q: How did you in your dealings of one of your many hats, how did you find dealing with the Chadian government? I mean, was it one of these things where you'd go and then there would be, was it Le Blanc or somebody, the Frenchman sitting off on one side. I heard one of the expressions that people who dealt with these governments at that time, parlay Le Blanc, in other words, let me talk to the guy in charge, really. Was this the case there or not?*

WAUCHOPE: Well, there was an effort to conceal the role of the French advisor because, as I was saying about negritude, there was an increasing sense that the African leaders of the former colonies had to assert themselves, distinguish themselves from the French. Be that as it may, the functioning of government was really in the hands of the "conseillers." These are the seconded French functionaries who are assigned there for two or four years or more. They liked the neo-colonial life; the life was reasonably good and they did make things work. Generally, we didn't cultivate them because there was an understanding, as represented both a donor nation and they were host government representatives, this would be inappropriate. If there were a Frenchman in the ministry, we would deal with the Chadian officials and you didn't deal with a Frenchman. Some of our AID people wanted to deal with the advisers, but we would discourage that. We wanted to give the Chadians the full measure of sovereignty. Yet we made errors in doing that because we received commitments from the government which it didn't have the wherewithal to implement. We had a program that seemed extraordinary promising on the northern coast of Lake Chad, a lake increases and decreases in size by a full three times annually. In the dry season, as the water recedes it leaves behind low-lying areas that are called polders. They can be farmed successfully because of the rich sedentary soils. Further, there are few insects or pests to attack the plants, and the fields didn't need fertilizer. So, we sent six Peace Corps volunteers there as a pilot program with promises of support from the government. The Peace Corps deserves tremendous credit for their effort. The volunteers flew to Mao on the Lake and then were taken by truck and then the last leg by camel. The only thing that distinguished them from the local people was that they were given this little kerosene-fired refrigerator to keep their beer cool, should they ever see one. Other than that, they lived just like the Chadians there. It was a great concept, and the production was excellent. They produced potatoes, and a variety of agricultural products on a serious scale, but when it came to marketing, the roads weren't available. If the volunteers came in by camel, how did you food get out? This became the choke point, and the Chadian government didn't come through with the promised roads.

There were six volunteers in this program and we went up to visit them. They talked about what the great prospects the project had. Within less than a year this whole project had collapsed because, along with all the hardships, the volunteers had to plow under the excess crops because they couldn't get them out to market. The produce was rotting in the fields. Eventually, all six of them abandoned the project. Some of them had a very rough time of it; some were reassigned, and some just quit. One had to be psycho-vac'd out, and another one came through my office. I must say, I'd had never seen an American quite that filthy before, he wore in a pair of shorts, period. His legs were filthy up to his knees, his hair was wild and he smelled. He told me he wanted to go to Cameroon and he wanted his passport, he had a Peace Corps passport. So, we issued it to him because he was entitled to it, but about six weeks later the Cameroonians expelled him. They said they didn't want this fellow here. But I mean they were all demoralized from the way in which this project had been undertaken and we much share some of the blame

because we bought their promises that they'd be able to do these things. Now, if you went to the French and you said, will you work with us? First of all, they're probably not inclined to help you and I know they sidetracked a number of our proposals that they just put to one side and they never came to anything. The Chadians were not prepared to take the French on again. Again, one thing I think the Americans have to appreciate about French influence in Francophone Africa is that a leader of a Francophone African country can get on the phone, assuming the phone lines work, to the President of France and have a conversation. He can talk to him about his concerns and problems, and has a reasonable expectation that the president will be responsive and provide him what he needs. On the few rare occasions that I'm aware of where African leaders tried to call the American President, they'd get blocked at the White House switchboard. So, they said, well, we hear all these great things about America, but what's important to us is to talk to your leader, as this is the way in which Africans work among themselves. If the American leader doesn't know who the hell I am, well, I've just been diminished in my peoples' eyes. The French President always took the phone calls. Sure, the leaders were whining for this or wanted that, but that's how things were. The French involvement and influence in Africa really turned on these kinds of favors, it was the fact that they could talk to the chief. Chief of State and receive a sympathetic hearing. I know in 1980s there was an acute crime problem in Abidjan and so Houphouet called, I guess it was Giscard at the time, and said he needed urgent help. Within days the French airlifted a dozen new patrol cars and provided French police advisors and weapons, etc. That's the kind of response the leader is looking for. If you asked the Americans to do that, we'd have to study the issue, negotiate an agreement and arrange procurement and shipment. We're talking a couple or three years and he had to deal with the problem right then. There's no substitute for that. You have to have that willingness to be responsive and the French did and we couldn't handle that. So, our ability to influence events was obviously very limited as a result.

*Q: What about turning to foreign affairs, I mean I realize you were pretty close to the bottom of the totem pole, but what about Libya and Sudan? I mean these were difficult countries.*

WAUCHOPE: They were, and both of them were active at that time. As I say, the key political event in the foreign affairs of Chad at the time was the overthrow of King Idriss and the ascent of Muammar Qadhafi who quickly assumed the role as a magnet for Arab radicals. He viewed his southern flank as vulnerable to his pan-Arab activities. There was an ongoing concern about him and, of course, he soon became something of a demon in the American hierarchy of demons, albeit that Libya was distant from the U.S. and not likely to be much threat to immediate American interests. We felt that the French strategy of having Chad serve as a buffer was probably overdrawn, and we were skeptical about Qadhafi's actual ability to immobilize the Islamic minority in Chad. They were a very decided minority in Chad, Niger and Mali, but he was testing the waters in these countries. Ironically, ultimately, he had some success. It wasn't necessarily Qadhafi, but the Islamic peoples of the north did eventually get control of the government in Chad, and yet all the profitable former colonies on the coast are under no more threat than they ever were. Ultimately, whoever runs the show in these coastal states has got to think about their own domestic problems rather than worry about regional threats.

Now, in Sudan the issues were similar, yet different. There was a north-south conflict, really a civil war between the Islamic north and the animist and Christian south. We'd occasionally see

refugees from the south come through Fort Lamy, the capital, and we would try to get some sense of what was going on. We realized we didn't have much influence in that region. Ironically, I later became the desk officer for Sudan, and by that time Nimeiri had hammered out a peace with the south, and essentially shoved it down the throats of the Islamic north. This effort eventually brought the civil war to a close, at least for awhile. Again, the Chadians' concern was that this conflict would ebb and flow across the border because, as elsewhere in Africa, the people who live along these borders are usually the same group. They know nothing about the importance of these national frontiers, and they moved back and forth without concern. So, these armed elements were always a matter of concern in this area of Chad. When Chad's Islamic dissidents in eastern Chad would trade food for arms with these people, it unnerved both the Chadians and the French. I remember going into the southeastern part of the country, the provincial capital of Am Timan. We flew in on a rainy day. You see we had this 1946 DC3 that was based in Fort Lamy, and the DAO had regional responsibilities all the way from Niger to Gabon, and Cameroon and Mali. So, our Ambassador could use it quite a bit. When we arrived, the security forces were people going around in ponchos, with sub-machineguns and even grenades in their hands. We thought, what in the devil is this all about? Of course, it was because of the instability in that province about which we heard nothing in the Capital. And that was in the southeastern part of Chad, not the northern regions which was in open revolt out side of the provincial capitals.

*Q: Looking at it from today when we're concerned about Islamic fundamentalism, was this a concern of ours at all?*

WAUCHOPE: Well, not so much fundamentalism, but the concepts of Arab nationalism and the degree to which it was opposed Western culture, Western concepts of democracy and representative government. Nasser had mobilized the Islamic world, and his successors and other Arab leaders were still agitating. You had the alliances between Libya, Egypt and Yemen. There was a concern that these activities would be an obstacle to Western access to resources of the Arab world. This nationalism was then rather low key, and we recognized that it was played up to enhance the legitimacy of otherwise shaky regimes. In the Arab world you had military governments, you had the Baathists, you had the conservative kingdoms and they were in conflict with one another despite that Arab nationalism. The Israelis were active in Chad in order to keep a foothold in this area to keep an eye on Qadhafi and his activities. They had a small military assistance mission to provide training for bodyguards and small arms, and some economic activities, very focused and directed activities.

*Q: Did you get any visits from Washington at that time?*

WAUCHOPE: We had of all things we had a congressional delegation of five congressmen from the House Agriculture Committee. Chad had never hosted five congressmen during its entire nine years of independence, and we had them all at one time. They came up from Cameroon by air and we took them across the Chari River to Cameroon by pirogue. You think of cultures sort of gliding past one another in the night, the way in which this whole visit worked out was a version of that. The sultan of Koussary on the Cameroon side had been briefed on the visit by through his general factotum. The congressmen were ushered into this big whitewashed mud chamber, and were seated on a straight-back banquet against one wall, and the sultan sat on a

throne facing them. After a long silent hiatus, the sultan says to his assistant, his vizier or whatever, "Who are these people?" The Americans were saying the same thing, who is this guy, why does he get to sit on the throne and we on this hard bench? After an exchange of formal greetings and some desultory remarks, the ceremony came to an end and the two cultures went their own ways. It was such a logistical headache to get the CODEL back and forth across the river because there was just the one ferry that crossed the river every hour; it was an unbelievable effort for the meager return. The CODEL's alleged purpose was to assess our modest AID program. You can hardly call it a boondoggle, as coming to Chad was no treat. Of course, what they really were looking for were prospects for selling American agriculture products. We did provide a fair amount of PL-480 wheat to Chad, and these wheat sales were a big issue in West Africa. The French had a monopoly on wheat imports; it was essentially dumping, I suppose, it was mostly subsidized aid donations. The French were resentful of PL-480, and, once again, considered it a part of a larger American conspiracy; we were providing Africa agricultural products to displace French influence. In reality, they were simply looking for markets for U.S. agricultural products in exotic locations.

*Q: Well, then you left there in 1971? Were there any coups or anything?*

WAUCHOPE: Right. Yes, there were several events that shook the government. The President was Francois Tombalbaye. There was evidence that Libya was supporting the northern insurgents, and this pressure combined with the failing economy drove Tombalbaye to embrace the philosophical concept that was dominating in the Francophone Bantu areas. He decided he had to rediscover his roots. He was influenced by people like Mobutu Sese Sekou and like Mobutu, he dropped his first name Francois and replaced it with Ngarta Tombalbaye. Further, his official photographs, which had been air-brushed after independence to remove his tribal scars, were restored to show the scars. He was a very handsome man. He had three scars on each. This was the beginning of a larger political purge.

*Q: We used to call it a member of the 111 club.*

WAUCHOPE: After I left, Tombalbaye began to test the loyalty of his subordinates by their willingness to undergo traditional initiation ceremonies called Yondo. This purge started then, but it was developing during my time. It reflected the fact that Tombalbaye was concerned about his legitimacy and his ability to retain power, not so much from the north, so much as his own people because they were becoming more educated, and more demanding of the rewards of independence. Development was stagnant and the single party state was suffocating. His objective was to rally his people behind him as the Chief of State. Also, there were charismatic leaders like Bokassa from the CAR to the south. He was popular beyond his borders for his anti-French statements, and I remember when he came to visit for an OCAM meeting. The crowd reaction to him was stunning.

*Q: Was he the emperor at that time?*

WAUCHOPE: He was not the emperor, at that point. He was just the chief of state, which was bad enough given his brutal rule. He was a real rabble-rouser; there's no question of that. He was well regarded and well received by most of the southern Chadians. They seemed to be attracted

to him because he put his finger in the French eye. He came to Fort Lamy for this meeting of Francophone heads of state in Central Africa and he was, by far, the biggest attraction. When he drove down the main avenue through the crowds in a procession with other chiefs of state came; everybody cheered and surged forward to see Bokassa. That evening there was a reception at the presidential palace along the river; the former French governor's residence. The Diplomats and the senior officials were all waiting there at our various tables as the invited African leaders arrived. This wait went on for more than an hour. We waited for two hours and most of the chiefs of state had arrived. Finally Bokassa was the only one who had not arrived. Chadian radio had a live broadcast from the Presidential Palace, and reporter was on the grounds talking to arriving guests. Noting the delay in the leaders coming out of the Palace to begin the dinner, he made reference to the fact that everyone was waiting for Bokassa. All of a sudden, the gates swing open and Bokassa and all his escort vehicles come roaring in across the lawn. Bokassa jumps out and gets a hold of the commentator and says, "By God, I'm glad you told me that I was the only person missing. I didn't know what time this thing started." He charges into the building, while we're all out on the lawn assembled at the tables. After the formal dinner, Bokassa was reported to be partying in the quartier dancing until dawn. He has invited Tombalbaye to join him, but the Chadian was a much more conservative individual. He was concerned that Bokassa had a tremendous amount of influence in the southern part of the country and Tombalbaye had to find ways to counter that. That's one of the reasons why he returned to these traditional ceremonies of Yondo.

*Q: Did Nigeria being an Anglophone country, but with a significant border, I mean small, but a significant border, which was the main commercial outlet, play an important role?*

WAUCHOPE: All commerce had to go across the neck of northern Cameroon and then down through Nigeria. At this time, Nigeria was in the grip of the Biafra civil war at this time, and their primary concern was about any of their neighbors helping the Biafrans. We had perhaps 20,000 Ibos mostly running businesses in Chad. There were in Fort Lamy and other major towns; they were very adept commercial people. They were undoubtedly sending money back for the Biafran cause.

*Q: Also, the French were messing around in Biafra weren't they?*

WAUCHOPE: They were. We never knew exactly how significantly, but they were concerned about Nigeria's size and potential influence in their realm in francophone Africa. They were also interested in Biafra's oil resources which the Biafrans thought a significant nation. On the other side of the coin, the Hausa in northern Nigeria are closely linked to the Islamic groups in Mali, Niger and Chad. The French had to play this game very carefully, but their interests in the region required that they keep a hand in. In fact, I had to pick up my car, a Jeep, in June 1969. I flew to Lagos on the WACASC plane and I drove it to Fort Lamy over five days from Lagos. That was a particularly tense time during the war and I was stopped multiple times at military and police checkpoints. I was advised not to drive after dark because the guards at the checkpoints start drinking about that time, and they were likely to open fire if they see a car after dark. Several Americans had been fired upon. These were the conditions I had to make my way through. Just north of Ibadan, I picked up a policeman in uniform. Every time we'd come to a checkpoint he'd put on his hat and tell me to go to the front of the line. This worked great. After I dropped him



off, I picked up a military policeman who had a submachine gun, a Sten gun, and we made it through all the checkpoints without any problem. I was a bit unnerved when we initially took off from the checkpoint and he said “Stop, I forgot something.” I backed up, he ran out and returned with his Sten gun which he then laid across his knees. I wondered if he forgot his weapon would he also forget to put on the safety.

By comparison with CAR and Chad, Nigeria had a good road network. Chad had only a few hundred miles of paved road. It’s a country that is three times the size of California.

**JOHN PROPST BLANE**  
**Deputy Chief of Mission**  
**Ft. Lamy (1969-1972)**

**Charge d’Affaires**  
**N’Djamena (1982)**

**Ambassador**  
**Chad (1985-1988)**

*Ambassador John Blane was born in Alabama. He attended the University of Tennessee and served in the US Army towards the end of the Korean War. He entered the Foreign Service in 1956. His career included positions in Somalia, Ethiopia, Austria, Cameroon, Chad, Kenya, and Rwanda. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on August 8, 1990.*

BLANE: Then I went off to Chad, for the first time, as DCM.

*Q: You were there from '69 to '72, is that right?*

BLANE: Right, I was there for about, oh, three years and four months or three years and five months, something of that nature.

*Q: How did you get the job?*

BLANE: The country director for East Africa was Terry Todman. I was the INR guy for East Africa, so I saw a lot of Todman, obviously, and he asked me would I like to go out and be his DCM. So I said yes.

*Q: Todman, of course, is one of our major career ambassadors. Could you describe how he used you and how he operated in the time you were together in Chad?*

BLANE: As he phrased it (and I suppose it's been phrased by many ambassadors in the same way), I was to be his alter ego. I was to run things as I thought he would run them. I tried to do

that. As most DCMs, I was the chief day-to-day, hands-on, management person. Keep the machine running. And I was also the principal political reporter.

*Q: Chad later became quite a focus, particularly at the time when you were back there as ambassador. But at this period of time, what was the situation?*

BLANE: Well, we had a little civil war going on. In '65 the western and northern peoples, primarily the desert types, revolted against the southern-dominated government.

I might point out that Chad sits astride the line that separates the Sahara Desert from Forest Africa, if you will. About the northern half of the country is in the Sahara. Sparsely populated, I might add, by nomadic desert people. Southern Chad's population is settled, agrarian, non-Muslim. You get a pretty distinct two groups: nomadic Muslim and sedentary non-Muslim.

*Q: What was the civil war about?*

BLANE: Basically, the desert folks didn't like being governed by the southerners. Specifically, what started it was taxes. At that point the southern peoples paid almost all of the taxes that were paid. They were probably not a great deal, but nevertheless the tax base of the country was in the south. And so the then-president, Tombalbaye, decided that he should get some more revenue from the northern folk.

So he attempted to do this. He tried to carry out an information campaign to tell these people what taxes were, what their taxes would be used for, and all this sort of thing. He had public meetings to propagandize or inform these people what the government was about.

At one such meeting, held in a little town in eastern Chad called Mangalmè, in 1965, a group of nine or ten people from the central government, including several parliamentarians, met with a group of nomadic folk. During the discussion, it came out that the nomads were claiming that they didn't have any money to pay taxes with.

And one of the government representatives made the unfortunate mistake of saying, "That's all right, you can pay us in kind. We'll just take some of your cattle."

You don't take the nomads' cattle very easily. The nomadic folk at the gathering took great exception to this and slew all of the government's representatives on the spot.

*Q: That ended the negotiations that day.*

BLANE: That's right, they just killed them all. And that was the start of what at first was just a sort of spontaneous uprising. There was no real organization or anything, it was just kicking back against a government that these peoples felt was oppressive and unfriendly.

*Q: We're talking about the '69 to '72 period. What were our interests and our attitude towards the situation there?*

BLANE: Well, again, we had no specific national interests in Chad. Obviously we wanted stability. If we could help contribute towards the maintenance of stability, we thought that would be a good thing. We did have a small economic assistance program, helped the folks in that fashion, but we had no concrete US interests there, obviously.

As the rebellion continued, however, it began to take on what appeared to be more and more a political character. Which is to say, some exiled Chadians formed something they called Frolinat, the National Liberation Front, and they used a lot of Marxist rhetoric. And I suspect that there were those somewhere around who could see an ideological threat of some sort building up in Chad. I don't think those of us who were there gave any credence to this at all. No matter what these exiles were saying, they had very little contact with the fighters on the ground. They were people in Paris, sitting up there running off leaflets and to hell with it. They weren't affecting what went on in Chad at all.

*Q: Again, was this one of these places where, whatever international concern there was, we were quite happy to see the French take care of things?*

BLANE: The French were taking care of things. Because the French were in combat in Chad from April 1969 until September 1972. They were in combat for three years there. It took them less time than it took us to realize that this was a sandpile that they weren't going to get out of very easily. So in the summer of '72 they said to hell with it, we're going home. And they went.

*Q: They went home not out of a huff or something, it was really a concrete decision this isn't in our interests, was it?*

BLANE: Their presence during these years had two aspects. The military aspect: they had troops in the field fighting. And an administrative/political aspect: they were trying to reform the government. They had something called the MRA in place. This was the Mission de Reform Administratif. The Administrative Reform Mission was trying to make the government work better and be less venal and less oppressive, and they weren't getting anywhere with the government at all. They weren't getting very far with the people out in the desert either. Finally the French said, "Well, if we can't help give this country a better government, there is no point in our wasting French money and French lives propping this regime up." And they went home.

*Q: What was your impression of the regime? The president was Tomb...*

BLANE: François Tombalbaye.

*Q: What was your impression, and what sort of contacts did you have with the government then?*

BLANE: I had frequent contacts with the government. Mr. Tombalbaye was, in my view, a thoroughly evil person. He was corrupt, he was oppressive. He was, I do believe, not quite mentally sound. And he was doing his best to make life miserable for his countrymen. He was not a pleasant person at all.

*Q: Again, we were just there.*

BLANE: We were just there.

*Q: This is obviously an unclassified interview, but did our CIA establishment have any eyes on trying to do something there?*

BLANE: No. No, no. No, no. Not at all.

*Q: What about Libya? Was it playing any particular role? How did we feel about Libya at the time?*

BLANE: All of this came about shortly following Mr. [take your pick] Qadhafi's, Khadafy's, Gadhafi's, al-Qadhafi's coming to power, which was in the fall of 1969. After Qadhafi came to power, Libya was playing, the Chadians felt, a very unhelpful role, with the result that in late '70 or early '71 (I'd have to go look it up) Chad broke diplomatic relations with Libya and sent the Libyan diplomats packing. That situation obtained for two or three years, and then ultimately relations were reestablished. But the government didn't feel that the Libyans had their best interests at heart.

*Q: When you left Chad in '72 to come back to Washington, what was your impression whither Chad at that time?*

BLANE: The war was still going on. My impression was that sooner or later the Tombalbaye government would, in one fashion or another, pass from the scene. Which happened two years later, when some members of the Army took the president out and shot him. But I don't think anybody who had served in Chad would have predicted that Tombalbaye would last indefinitely. I think we all felt that this government was going to collapse sooner or later.

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*Q: Well then, your next assignment, what was it and how did it come about?*

BLANE: Toward the end of my time at the UN [1982], I got a telephone call from the Department of State informing me that the Libyans, who had been occupying the capital of Chad for about a year and a half, were going to pull their troops out, and we wanted to have a presence in Chad immediately. Therefore it was kindly requested that I would dispatch myself off to Chad. And I did that.

At first we had a little house over across the river.

*Q: Was your family with you?*

BLANE: No, no.

The Chari River forms a border between Chad and Cameroon, and we had a little house over on the Cameroonian side. We had had this little house throughout the Libyan occupation, and we

sort of looked across the river to see how things were going. And so, for the first couple or three weeks I was out there, I lived over on the Cameroonian side and commuted across into Chad by pirogue. I was maybe the only representative of the United States who went to work by pirogue every morning. I got quite a long, two-column piece on this aspect from *The New York Times* during this period.

*Q: Did you fly your flag on the pirogue?*

BLANE: No, I had the flag on the car.

So I went out and we reopened our embassy in N'Djamena on January 17, 1982. I had had to convert the ambassador's residence into an office building because our chancellery had been pretty well destroyed during the second battle for N'Djamena.

The second battle, I might note, lasted for nine months. They fought back and forth across the town, using tanks and heavy artillery and aerial bombardment and this sort of thing. Pretty well destroyed the town; there wasn't much left in '82. N'Djamena was just rubble. And there were almost no people. All the Chadians at that point were living in a refugee camp also across the river in Cameroon. About 200,000 were living over there.

And so, setting up again as best one could, working with almost nothing, I got an embassy functioning again and turned it over to Peter Moffat. I was there, oh, three and half months or so and then Peter came out to be permanent chargé. A year or so later he became ambassador, and I went back to the Department of State to go through the preliminaries to go out to Rwanda as ambassador.

*Q: Why had the Libyans pulled out of Chad?*

BLANE: They didn't pull out of Chad. They said they were going to pull out of Chad, but they didn't really do it. They pulled out of the capital and some of the more southerly areas. They sort of pulled back up into the desert, they didn't really go home.

*Q: What type of government had they left?*

BLANE: Well, the president was a gentleman by the name of Goukouni Oueddei, who now lives in Tripoli. He was one of the original rebels from a long dot, as we say, (I can't even speak English any more), from a long time ago. He had had a falling out with the other principal rebel, Mr. Hissen Habré, who is now president. Goukouni had asked the Libyans to come in on his side. They managed to chase Habré's forces out of the country into Sudan, and Goukouni was making an effort at running the country--not a very good effort.

*Q: You went back to Chad as ambassador from '85 to '88. It certainly made sense. I mean, nobody had had more experience there. Was the job just a logical choice and you got it, or was there any maneuvering?*

BLANE: I certainly didn't maneuver. It was sort of funny. Normally, before one is named to an ambassadorship, the Personnel people will call you up and say, "Mr. Blane, if the president were to name you to, let us say, Rwanda, would you accept the assignment?"

And you say, "Yes."

And they say, "Fine."

Then after awhile, some days later, Mr. Reagan would call you up and say, "Hey, you want to go to Rwanda?"

"Right."

For Chad, it didn't go like that. Personnel called me up and they didn't ask me anything. They called me up and said, "Ambassador Blane?"

"Yes."

"The president has decided to name you ambassador to Chad. Goodbye."

They didn't ask my opinion one way or another. I think they knew the answer anyway.

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*Q: You went in '85. What was the situation at that time?*

BLANE: About forty-five percent of the country was occupied by the Libyan army. The Libyans had a major air base in northern Chad, built from scratch, at a place called Wadi Doum. They had lots and lots of army there. They had armor, combat aviation. Their whole military might was based in northern Chad, or in southern Libya just north of northern Chad.

Nobody knew what was going to happen, whether they were going to try to move south and retake the capital. Because between '82, when I left, and '85, when I came back, the forces of Hissen Habré had managed to drive in from Sudan and oust the Libyan-backed president, Mr. Goukouni Oueddei. Goukouni was back off in Libya, the army was in the northern part of Chad, and Mr. Habré was in power in N'Djamena. And Mr. Habré and the Libyans did not get along-- and do not get along.

So we didn't really know what the Libyan intentions were, but the fact of the matter on the ground was: they were there in force. And the Chadian objective, ultimate objective, was to drive them out. But for the first several months I was there, the stalemate, which had existed since '83, continued. The Libyans were north of the 16th Parallel; the Chadians were south of the 16th Parallel. And basically, nothing happened.

Then, beginning in '86, the Libyans and their Chadian allies... Because Mr. Goukouni Oueddei had a few forces of his own. In theory, they were the anti-Habré element and only being helped

by the Libyans. Actually, the Libyans had fifty times as many people as Goukouni did. He really was, militarily, of no consequence at all. Anyway, there were some probing actions down south across the 16th, which were successfully repelled by the Chadian army.

And then, on January 1, 1987, the Chadian army went on the offensive itself and struck the southernmost Libyan base, which was at Fada, and, in a very short but sharp action, took the town; routed the Libyans; destroyed an awful lot of Libyan armor; captured some Libyan airplanes that never got off they ground; shot down some Libyan aircraft, both fixed-wing and rotary-wing; and generally acquitted themselves beautifully.

Now this astounded the French. Because it had been evident for some time that the Chadians were mulling over starting an offensive, the French had cautioned them very strongly against it, saying that if you take on the Libyans, you remember what happened last time, the Libyans drove down and occupied the capital. If you waken this sleeping dog, the same thing may happen again.

And the Chadians said, "Phooey, no conceivable way. We are superior to the Libyan army and will so demonstrate." And they did.

The war then went on until the late spring of '88, by which time the Libyans had been, to all intents and purposes, driven out of Chad. The Libyans lost probably seven hundred heavy tanks, a hundred or so combat aircraft. Several thousand Libyans were taken prisoner. All of their major bases in Chad were taken. The huge Libyan air base at Matan Isara, up inside Libya, was destroyed.

The Chadians were having a little problem at one point with the Libyan combat aviation. The Chadians had no combat aviation--not a single airplane. The Libyans didn't use theirs very effectively, but they were there, and the Chadians were sort of irritated by then. Since they couldn't do anything in the air against the Libyans, they just mounted a lightning strike, drove up into Libya, and just totally wasted the air base. Just gone. All the airplanes on the ground.

They took a lot of people with them who could drive, obviously, because they brought back six hundred trucks. They captured six hundred trucks on that...

*Q: When you were all there, how come the Chadians were so good and the Libyans were so bad?*

BLANE: The Chadians are extremely good desert fighters; they know how to do it. The Libyans have never demonstrated they could do anything militarily; they're awful. The Chadians were good, but the Libyans were just hopeless. All they could do was get themselves killed.

Now the difference between 1980-81 and 1986-88 was that the Chadians had something to fight with. When they were fighting the Libyans earlier, they had a few old bolt-action World War II Italian rifles, a few machine guns, and that's about it. They didn't have much mobility, they didn't have any firepower. In the '86-88 war, they had great mobility and great firepower.

*Q: How come?*

BLANE: We gave it to them, that's how come.

*Q: Was this overt, covert, or how did this thing work out?*

BLANE: It was quite overt. Had to be--there were times that the N'Djamena Airport looked like Rhein Main. I mean, I had C-5s, and C-141s lined up on that runway; we were running an airlift in that place you wouldn't believe.

*Q: Why? What was our policy in Chad at the time you were there?*

BLANE: All-out support of the Chadians. As you may remember, Mr. Reagan had a thing about Col Qadhafi. He just didn't like Col. Qadhafi at all. And if you've got somebody who has a capable force--willing to use it, wanting to use it, going to use it against Mr. Qadhafi--you help him. And we helped.

*Q: As of today, August 8, 1990, America is putting troops into Saudi Arabia because of a major threat from Iraq, and it's a very difficult situation. At one point not too long ago, we were looking upon Iraq as being somebody we would like to give support to because of their fighting Iranians. Were we ever concerned about what we were doing in Chad, as far as the balance of Central Africa might be concerned?*

BLANE: We were trying to help Chad establish itself as a counterweight to Libya. And we did, and they did.

*Q: Was there any sort of greater Chadian movement, that this might spread out?*

BLANE: No. No. No, the Chadians said, always, that they didn't want one square foot of the Libyan desert, they had all the desert they needed thank you very much. They just wanted the Libyans the hell out of their country. They have no territorial aspirations in other directions at all.

*Q: Could you tell me about your dealings with and your evaluation of Hissen Habré.*

BLANE: I worked very closely with the president because he was his own defense minister. Whereas in Rwanda I had maybe a half a dozen private meetings with the president in three years, there were long periods in Rwanda where I met with the president almost daily, at least three or four times a week. So I got to know him quite well, and we worked together, I think, obviously successfully, because the work got done. He was a good man to work with. Very decisive. Very strong fellow. He spent a lot of time out fighting. I mean, that's how he came to power, he was a war leader. He's had lots and lots of combat time himself, so he knew what the people were doing. His one objective, his only objective, during my period of service there, was to get rid of the Libyans. That's all he thought about. And he did it.

*Q: Here he was, a man of the north desert and all, and you talked about Chad being divided. How was this mix of, you might say, the desert and the cultivated, maybe even it's black and, more Arab...*



BLANE: No, no, it's linguistic, not skin color. Northern Chadians are just as black as anybody else. Linguistically, it's different.

We commented at the time, I think everybody commented, that Col. Qadhafi had done more for Chadian unity than any other force imaginable, than any force since the assessioned independence of the country.

The Chadian northerners and southerners don't feel an awful lot of kinship one for the other at times. But they were united on one thing: neither wanted the Libyans. They were absolutely united in wanting to liberate the country from the Libyans. No reticence on the southerner's part at all.

*Q: Had the Libyans had a pretty heavy hand when they were in, all the way down at N'Djamena?*

BLANE: I don't think so. You just don't like your country being occupied by a foreign power. No, the Libyans didn't do anything really horrid while they were there. They did some horrid stuff as they left, primarily in broadcasting hundreds of thousands of plastic land mines all over the bloody desert. It's going to be years and years and years and years before all those things get cleaned up. Other than that, I don't think they did commit any of the real atrocities. I've never heard of any. But they weren't beloved, and the southerners fought right alongside the northerners in getting them out.

The army is still largely non-Saharan, because there aren't many Saharan peoples. So, numerically, any army, or any other kind of organization in Chad, is going to be very heavily non-Saharan.

*Q: Habré made a visit to the United States in June of '87.*

BLANE: He did that.

*Q: Did you go with him?*

BLANE: I did.

*Q: How did it go?*

BLANE: It went beautifully. I came over ahead of him to help prepare things. My wife came back with me and was with Mrs. Habré the whole time. Oh, it just went swimmingly. Mr. Habré and Mr. Reagan got along just dandily. Yes, indeed. Mr. Habré had just finished delivering Col Qadhafi's head on a platter.

As you know, ambassadors very often will recommend to Washington that their heads of state be invited for a visit. Now this has happened at every post I have ever served at, with the exception of Chad. I did not recommend that visit. I got a cable one day saying the president would love to see Mr. Habré. So I trotted over to see the boss, and Mr. Habré said he would be delighted to go.

*Q: Was Habré politically astute, would you say?*

BLANE: Well, he has a degree of political sensitivity. He wasted his life: he's got one degree in law and one in political science, so...ruined. Yeah, he's a bright guy, very, very bright, yep.

*Q: Did you have any problem, as the ambassador, in dealing with, really, obviously a massive amount of military aid? You must have had the CIA doing their thing. You know, an awful lot in a small country. Was this a problem of coordinating?*

BLANE: No, no problem of coordination at all, because it was all done basically between me and the president. There were only two of us doing all this coordinating, so that didn't cause any problems.

One thing it did necessitate was my learning an awful lot more about modern weapons systems and things like that than I ever thought I would need to know, but I got my... [tape ended]

*Q: Obviously when you've got a war going on like this, you get a lot of press. How about the media, was this a problem?*

BLANE: Not much. I'm very fortunate in that I know practically every journalist that works in Africa. I have known them for years and years and years, they keep coming back. See, most of them live in Nairobi, so if you've done three years in Nairobi, you tend to have met all of the journalists around. I had a lot of good friends amongst the journalists. No, they didn't cause any problems. They came in quite frequently. We didn't have any resident in Chad, but we had lots of visitors of all kinds: John Randal from the *Post*, Greg James from the *Times*, all sorts.

*Q: When you were there before, France was the predominant power. By the time you were there again, would you say the United States had the major interest?*

BLANE: No, France certainly was still the predominant foreign partner of Chad, in that France just put so much more money into the effort. Not the military effort but the total support package: aid, teachers, budget support, you name it. We gave budget support, too, by the way. We supported seven ministries, and the French supported the rest. We divided the pie. And this was a straight money transfer.

*Q: You left there in 1988. How did you feel about Chad? Wither Chad, not just the war but as a government and all that?*

BLANE: Chad is a very poor country, and it's not going to go much of anyplace until its government's revenues are, I think the word these days is "enhanced," a lot.

Fortunately, that is in the offing. Chad's got a lot of oil. Now so far this oil has not done Chad any good because the oil is in Chad; the oil is not somewhere else. Chad is, if you will notice, a long way from any oceans. And so what is going to have to happen is that somebody is going to have to build a pipeline, probably to Douala through Cameroon. This will be about an eight- or

nine-hundred-mile pipeline. This is going to cost a couple of billion bucks. Now the oil companies are prepared to make this sort of investment...when the price is right. As they've said so often, nobody can pump \$13 oil from Chad. But looking at the current world situation, you know, it's an ill wind that blows no good. This ill wind may be blowing Chad a very...

*Q: We're referring to the present situation in which Iraq has just seized Kuwait; oil prices have gone way up.*

BLANE: And a significant chunk of the world's oil reserves are under hostile domination at the moment. So this may be doing Chad a good turn. Because the oil is there, and it will be pumped, but probably not until the market price is around \$25 bucks a barrel. At \$25 bucks a barrel, they can make money on Chadian oil.

*Q: When you left in 1980, did you decide to retire at that time?*

BLANE: I did. Well, how shall I say, I was in the situation that so many of us find ourselves in: no interesting onward assignment was forthcoming.

### **TERENCE A. TODMAN**

**Ambassador  
Chad (1969-1972)**

*Ambassador Terence A. Todman was born in 1926 and raised in St. Thomas, Virgin Islands. He attended the Polytechnic Institute of Puerto Rico and served in the U.S. Army. Ambassador Todman received a bachelor's degree from Syracuse University. His Foreign Service career included positions in Tunisia, Togo, Chad, Guinea, Costa Rica, Spain, Denmark, and Argentina. He was interviewed by Michael Krenn on June 13, 1995.*

*Q: You got there at, I guess, an interesting time, is the way to say it. Revolt was on, French troops had come in the year before you got there?*

TODMAN: No, actually the whole thing started while I was there. With Libya. And, as a matter of fact, I was in on the beginning of it, because President Francois Tombalbaye, called me over and showed me a message he had received from Muammar El Qadhafi, which said, "Throw out the Israelis and I'll give you anything you want. I'll take care of you, all your material needs. Keep them and I'll make you pay for it." Tombalbaye said, "This is insulting and I'm telling him that. That I'm the president of a sovereign country and I reject this kind of thing being written to me." What Tombalbaye had was a very small Israeli embassy, the ambassador and maybe one or two people and there was a small technical assistance mission there, doing reforestation in Chad. I told Tombalbaye, you know, "This is your country, you do what you think is correct. I just thank you for letting me know about it." Tombalbaye did send that message and it was shortly after that, that the Toubous, up in the north, got arms. They had been unruly in any case. Then started the major attacks. Tombalbaye had committed a number of mistakes, because without

understanding or trying to understand the culture of those people who wander around in a nomadic life, and leaving them with freedom, he tried to install a system under which they would pay taxes and they would have to show their respect to the central government. The French had been smart enough never to do that. they just left them alone. They got together once a year and had a big feast and pledged loyalty to each other and they were allowed to go on their own the rest of the time. Once Tombalbaye started to collect taxes, people said, "OK, we pay taxes, we get benefits." The only thing, as it turned out, was you pay a dollar in taxes, you want ten dollars in benefits. It can't be done. And then you try to impose certain practices which are fine customs for one set of people, not at all suitable to the other. So, there was some unrest already present, but the Libyans exploited that and provided the arms. That then led to the major outbreak and that's when I got instrumental in encouraging French action. Ambassador Vernon "Dick" Walters, General Walters, was then our military attaché in France. I had known Dick before, and got to know him even better then. And we worked together, because Tombalbaye then needed help very badly, it was something that the United States was not in a position to provide, nor did I see any reason why we should. It was with our encouragement, actually, that the French came in and helped. That was a critical time for the country and for U.S. relations with that country.

*Q: What were your relations like with the French? Because that's...*

TODMAN: Excellent. In every case, even when we were taking independent positions, the relations were excellent, because the French got to understand that we weren't looking for anything. We weren't looking to be bosses. We just had a policy. We would develop our own positions and talk to them. We weren't going to counter them or try to keep them out. In fact, my approach always was, how can we coordinate our activities so that the country gets the most out of it? And I made several attempts, I did it in Togo and I did it there in Chad, to get them to create aid-donor coordinating committees. It never worked, I would have a hell of a job selling it back in Washington, too, because each country wants to get credit for what it's doing. And somehow the interest doesn't seem to be as sharp, in my mind, on how much does the aided country get? If you would sit down and talk about this, and plan the things in a complementary way, you'd get a lot more. The whole would be greater than the sum of its parts. But it's never done that way, therefore the whole is much less than the sum of its parts, unfortunately. But, we got along very well with the French. And they understood, in this case, that it was going to be their show. So once the decision was taken that they were going to move in, we agreed we'd be supportive in any way we could, but they were going to be the ones running it.

**EDWARD W. MULCAHY**  
**Ambassador**  
**(1972-1974)**

*Ambassador Edward W. Mulcahy received a degree from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University in 1943. Within eight weeks of the bombing of Pearl Harbor, he enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve. At the end of World War II, Ambassador Mulcahy joined the Foreign Service. In addition to serving in Germany, he served in Kenya, Ethiopia, Southern Rhodesia,*

*Tunisia, Nigeria, and Chad. Ambassador Mulcahy was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on March 23, 1989.*

*Q: We're talking about 1972-1974. What were the principal interests of the United States in Chad?*

MULCAHY: We had very little interest there. We had a small AID program which was administered from Cameroon, from next door, because we didn't have enough of an AID program there to warrant full-time AID people. It was being taken care of by specialists who came up from Yaoundé up to do a project and then go back or who could handle projects that were in operation with one hand on occasional visits. We built up a better AID program in the course of my time there.

*Q: You were there during some rather difficult climatic problems.*

MULCAHY: We had the great famines of Africa. They were later hitting Chad. They were much more severe west of Chad from Senegal across to Mali, Upper Volta, as it was called then, and Niger. So Chad really was running almost a year later than the other countries that were being hit by the famine.

As soon as the famine hit, the local authorities at Fort Lamy were quite conscious of the need to act fast. We were in a position to respond quickly.

*Q: We'd already had an apparatus in being . . .*

MULCAHY: That's right. I had been over with all the ambassadors in West Africa to a conference in Abidjan in March of 1974, about the time the affairs was hitting us. We had a meeting with the then new Assistant Secretary, Donald Easum. It was really in my last year in Chad that the famine became a problem. I had at that time been up to the areas north of Lake Chad and seen these human skeletons flocking into the administrative center of Mao. They had people who walked for days and who had eaten their last cattle and their last kernel of corn. This was because of drought. I had seen that.

Ambassadors were in a position to commit something like a \$125,000 immediately and I did. You just notified Washington that you were obligating \$125,000 for blankets, foods and medicines. We found we could buy powdered milk in Nigeria. To make immediate impact with American aid while you got people out, like the Air Force people from North Carolina who came out to look at the quality of your runways and how you could run an air drop or whether you could land in some of these God-forsaken places and get sacks of grain unloaded. It took advance study and then you began getting almost immediately representatives of CARE, Catholic Relief Services, Lutheran World Federation, the gamut of the voluntary assistance organizations.

*Q: By this time you're really talking about people who really knew what they were about.*

MULCAHY: That's right. We never found any statistics on people who actually starved to death. But I'm not sure that anybody starved to death in Chad. I think we'd had enough experience farther over in West Africa for the year before and, thanks to Senator Humphrey, of course, we could operate these relief programs with AID funds with almost no detailed accountability. We didn't have to go through the horrible red tape and feasibility studies. No funds were wasted.

*Q: And also the huge staff that comes with handing out the food.*

MULCAHY: Exactly.

We eventually got three or four permanent AID people in there on various new programs. We slightly expanded our USIS operations there. Under François Tombalbaye, the president, they were very receptive to our help with education there. He went into an "authenticity" chapter toward the end of his life, my second year there, and he used his family name first as the Chinese do and as the Africans do and his given name afterwards. Well, his given name was Ngarta, so he gave up his François, a French name which was given to him by the American Baptist missionaries who trained him. He thought that Chadians at this stage should have an option of talking to the rest of the world in English or French. He thought that, since they had a very primitive educational system in the country, it wasn't too late to change. Large numbers of our Peace Corps Volunteers were teaching English.

*Q: How did this play out with the French? Was this before or after the French military had been kicked out?*

MULCAHY: The French military had been kicked out but were back in by the time I got there. They were expelled again while I was there and they came back in before I left. Each of those French territories signed a treaty at the time of independence with France, mutual defense treaties. France had the right to station troops in any one of the former French territories. They kept a sizable parachute battalion at Sarh which used to be called Fort Archambault in the southern part of the country and an Air Force unit at Fort Lamy, whose name was changed in late 1973 to N'Djaména.

*Q: Was Libya a problem when you were there?*

MULCAHY: Libya was already supporting an insurrection up in the Tibesti Massif among the Toubou tribe. They later double-crossed the young leader of the Toubou and supported a patriarchal type. Eventually the young man eventually became president of Chad and kicked out the Libyans. That was going on in the Tibesti Mountains which are 14,000 feet high out in the Sahara, up in the northern part of Chad.

There was also an insurrection going on over in the southeastern part of the country along the border with Sudan where the people had been up in arms and refusing to pay taxes for quite a number of years before I got there and where the Tombalbaye government simply didn't have enough troops or police or muscle to require them to pay taxes. They'd just fade off into the hills when the tax collectors were coming.

*Q: Was this of interest to us or were we willing to say, "If there's a problem here, it's a French problem."*

MULCAHY: Tombalbaye called me at least three times in my short tour in Chad, usually in the middle of siesta hour in the afternoon to come over and talk with him. He did that many other times on other subjects, but three times he called me over and would say to me, "Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, ce pay est absolument ingovernable." (Mr. Ambassador, this country is absolutely ungovernable).

He would beg me to send American advisors, in effect to take over his government. "Please, this I put to you as the representative of President Nixon. Convey to the President who has my great admiration, the fact that I beg of him to come take this country over. Make it a model of development. Make it an American colony for a while. Make it something that America can be proud of in Africa." Three times he begged me to do this.

*Q: How did you deal with this?*

MULCAHY: I sent it home and I said, "It goes without saying that I am not sending this in with a recommendation that it be accepted."

We quite honestly felt that this was a country in the French sphere. It was the French who left it with only 100 kilometers of paved road, with not one kilometer of railroad in the 60 years that they had governed the country--70 years almost, in parts. The Foreign Legion had administered everything north of Lake Chad until 1936 when they said, "Well, it's pacified enough for you to send civil administrators in now." That was just three years before World War II broke out. It had been turned over to civil administration and it had been unpacified.

*Q: Was the President just using you as sort of a shoulder to cry on from time to time?*

MULCAHY: Yes. He liked Americans. I had the good luck to follow Terry Todman as ambassador there. Terry had been my assistant desk officer when I had trusteeship affairs almost 20 years before but had become ambassador long before I did. Terry was a native of the Virgin Islands and born under a colonial regime himself, in a manner of speaking, but a very, very personable, sweet guy with an excellent command of French. He and the president had really become very, very close. I told the president, when I presented my letters of credence, that I hoped I'd become just as good a friend as my old buddy, Terry Todman. He took me up on it. He'd have me over without any protocol on ten minutes notice.

*Q: And we had, in effect, drawn up spheres of influence where we would do more than in some other areas, hadn't we? In a way, there was a concentration--some were felt to be--this is a French responsibility and others were British responsibility, Portuguese, so let's--I would like to go on. Is there anything else we should cover, do you think?*

MULCAHY: No. I think that's about the most significant things about a country like Chad. I enjoyed my time there. I really wish I could have stayed longer. I'd love to have stayed another year there.

**LEONARDO NEHER**  
**Deputy Chief of Mission**  
**N'Djamena (1972-1974)**

*Ambassador Leonardo Neher was born on December 5, 1922 in Akron, Ohio. He attended Akron University for a year before serving in the U.S. Army from 1943 to 1946. After his time in the Army, he received his BA from Bowling Green State University in 1948 and his MA from the University of Chicago in 1952. Throughout his career he has held positions in countries including Morocco, Vietnam, Syria, Zaire, Chad, the Dominican Republic, and Burkina Faso. Ambassador Neher was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on October 18, 1989.*

*Q: Then let's move on, shall we? You were next assigned from 1972 to '74 to Chad as Deputy Chief of Mission. What were your main responsibilities there?*

NEHER: When I arrived there was no Ambassador, so I arrived as Chargé. I got there the first part of October. The Ambassador came and presented his credentials in November.

The date of my arrival coincided with the date of the release of a report by a French team that had looked at the drought situation in Chad. It was the first report that alerted all of us, and the world, to the seriousness of the drought and the famine that was likely to follow. It described a calamity, and neither the government nor the donor agencies, who had known there was a drought, understood the extent of it until this team produced the report. Once that report was distributed--it went to the UN and all foreign governments--everybody geared up to organize relief. Its effect was rather like that of the drought pictures coming in from Ethiopia somewhat later.

*Q: You are talking about the Ethiopian pictures of starvation.*

NEHER: Of starvation. So immediately we had to gear up to do something to respond to the needs of the Chadians. There was no USAID mission in Chad, and I became the coordinator of the efforts in the absence of USAID. I ran the AID program, the drought relief program, from then on. I had come to the post in 1972, and we got our first AID permanent employee only in 1974, just four or five months before I was to leave. In the meantime, there I was. The staff consisted of the Ambassador, myself as DCM, an Economic/Consular Officer, an Admin Officer, and a GSO along with communications and secretarial staff. That was it, and we had big programs to implement, and lots of visitors to handle.

*Q: When you say a big program, what were you doing?*

NEHER: Mostly PL 480 emergency food supplies that had to be brought in. We had temporary missions of AID people and military people coming in with flights of food in C-130s. We



shipped a whole lot of food by truck from Lagos. There were difficult negotiations with the Chadian truckers' organization, including a problem of trucks owned by the wife of the president. And there were negotiations with the host government and problems of coordination with other donors--who is doing what and where. And then we had to get out in the countryside too, in the absence of reliable information from the government. I liked that duty best of all. So we'd get in the old Landrover and go out across the desert to a village and survey the needs. Then we'd go back to N'Djamena, the capital, and arrange for relief.

*Q: Having come from Zaire, was there a difference in dealing with the people in Chad, the government?*

NEHER: A very different kind of people. There was corruption at high levels, as well as at lower levels. But there was not the kind of very scary, unpredictable situation in Zaire. There was no drunken general, there were no abusive road blocks. I didn't see anybody abuse alcohol or any kind of drugs. So you could make appointments with people, you could talk with them, you could have rational programs laid on in dealing with people who understood. The level of education was far superior in Chad, especially among those in the administration, to what we had in Zaire. Even at the secondary levels you had people with advanced degrees, and people running technical bureaus. In Zaire, usually if you got down to a level below the top and the few people who had advanced studies, you had to deal with some pretty minimally educated people. It was a very different place. These are people of the Sahel and the upland savannah, and of a very different culture. Islam, the dominant religion, has a great effect. Islam doesn't foster as much superstition and witchcraft as does the Congolese culture. There's very little of it. You have the Marabout, and the fortune tellers, but there isn't so much reliance on magic, and the role of the witch doctor or shaman is less important, so prevalent. The society is more rational in our sense of the word, with a much more modern kind of thinking, and reactions are more predictable when discussing programs and plans.

The exception to this was the president himself. Tombalbaye. He began to suspect that others were plotting against him and that he could rely only on his fellow tribesmen from the south--the Sara. So he decreed that only those who had gone through the initiation ceremonies of his tribe could be trusted and any Sara who had missed out on that rite had to go back to the village and do it. Even the 40-something Foreign Minister had to do it. It almost killed him. And Tombalbaye began to consult two Haitian voodoo practitioners to divine who might be plotting against him. This turn in the president brought about his downfall a year after I left Chad.

*Q: What was our interest in Chad? I would have thought that we would have sat back and said, "This is a French problem. We'll let the French be the leaders, and our role is very secondary."*

NEHER: It was. We did not have much of a sense of competition with the French for the hearts and minds of the Chadians. We didn't speak their language. We didn't have significant educational exchanges between the two countries. But at that time it was the policy of the United States to have a presence in each of these countries, and to make English language a vehicle. People would listen to our radio broadcasts, read our publications; we wanted to create an audience. I suppose it's because we weren't sure that our interests would always coincide with those of France. And then when it came to aid, we were far better placed to respond in

emergencies. We had money for airplanes. We had the airplanes, the big C-130s and the French had nothing comparable. They had the Transall, which is a fraction of the C-130. So we responded, and we responded fully to the Chadian emergency, and I spent the bulk of my time working on that.

*Q: How did it come out while you were there? How did you see our program? Do you feel it was effective?*

NEHER: Yes. It was effective. We got the food into the country, we got it distributed, we saved a lot of lives. As for the aid projects that always come on the heels of emergency programs--because you've got lots of money now; we've got to spend it on something--they were almost universally failures, inevitably failures. There was no way to do grain silos, or cattle corridors, or wells that would not go dry. And then, I think it was in 1975, a year after I left for my next assignment, President Tombalbaye was assassinated and Chad went into a period of even greater instability which just has ended within the last two years. So there's no reason to think those projects might have survived. They didn't survive. But we were effective in what we did. I am sometimes invited to speak to the new hires of AID, people who are going to Africa. I try to give them a different perspective, the Ambassador's perspective on AID programs, a perspective distinct from their own. I mention Chad sometimes. If you say that because there's nothing left of the projects, because none of them succeeded and survived, they have failed. The Ambassador may say, "No, the programs have succeeded marvelously." Because their purpose was, in fact, to demonstrate to the Chadian government and people, and to the international community that we would respond to their distress. We had no illusions about the durability of the projects and programs for Chad. We, the government, were also responding to the demands of media-driven U.S. public opinion that we do something. We also wanted to have access to the Chadian leaders, to be able to talk to them when there was reason for interaction. All these efforts succeeded. And therefore, in spite of the fact that all those AID-financed structures are covered with dust, an Ambassador could consider these programs successful. An AID director would have to say they were not. More recently, our aid programs were designed to help keep Qadhafi's hands off Chad, and here too they succeeded.

*Q: Qadhafi is the leader of Libya.*

NEHER: Although when I was there, that wasn't the main concern. It became that about a year after I left.

*Q: You went to INR. You were director for analysis for Africa. This was between '82 to '84. What was your impression of the African Bureau. Not the Intelligence and Research side, but the African Bureau. Its approach towards Africa. This would be under the Reagan administration, always a new administration's new look, and all that. What was your impression?*

NEHER: The Reagan administration, dealing with Africa, was concerned about one problem only, South Africa. Assistant Secretary Chester Crocker had written an article for Foreign Affairs that came out in the fall of 1980 just before the first election of Ronald Reagan, and it marked him as the person who really had something to say, had a strategy for dealing with Southern Africa, and that's why he was selected as Assistant Secretary. So during his time, that was the

main preoccupation of the Reagan administration and the Africa Bureau; most of its resources were channeled into that. There were other things happening. For example, Chad. That was also one of the preoccupations too, about Qadhafi and his intentions, but South Africa was where the focus was kept.

Q: *Qadhafi of Libya was launching attacks against Chad.*

NEHER: Right, and the United States was going to make an effort to see that he was frustrated, that he did not get his hands on Chad. There were other things happening in Africa. The severe drought in the Sahel was one of them, Then, you had to establish a pattern, a Reagan administration pattern, of dealing with a number of controversial people, like Mobutu. What do you do with Mobutu? How do you handle that relationship that's got real thorns in it? Generally, you have some kind of a cast to your policy on former French Africa. It isn't just an AID policy that effects Senegal, and Gabon, but you've got to have some kind of an approach and you begin to see traces of that in an administration like Reagan's.

In almost all of this I was a great admirer of the AF front office. Crocker had an intellectual capacity that was really very satisfying. Frank Wisner, too. They were an impressive pair at AF. Dealing with them, which I had to do every day because I briefed them...I took over the briefing...

**EDWARD S. LITTLE**  
**Ambassador**  
**Chad (1974-1976)**

*Ambassador Edward S. Little was born in Ohio in 1918. He received an undergraduate degree from Swarthmore College and then attended the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. He served in the U.S. Navy during WW II. Ambassador Little joined the Foreign service in 195. He served in Ecuador, Spain, the Dominican Republic, Switzerland, and Chad. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1989.*

Q: *I'd like to move on now to your time in Chad. That was a rather exciting time wasn't it?*

LITTLE: Just a little coup d'etat.

Q: *When you went there in 1974, what were our interests in Chad at that time?*

LITTLE: Basically to fly the flag. The Soviets had a mission there. The East Germans did. We were interested in agricultural production. Chad is one of the poorest countries in the world in terms of a made up number of the per capita GNP. It has to be made up because they don't know- they don't have information.

They produce cotton, skins, hides and that sort of thing but not much else. They had some potential for agricultural development. That was the basis on which our aid program was worked out. A fair number of interesting projects to meet that. Then the coup d'état came. Then again, that was another ball game.

Q: *When you arrived there what was the situation before the coup d'état?*

LITTLE: Tombalbaye, then president, had been president since 1960 when Chad became independent. Authoritarian--if he saw somebody who might be a threat they were either imprisoned or exiled. The brighter one's were exiled. He was just ruling the country in that manner. No elections.

Q: *Had he rejected wheat relief and all this before you arrived?*

LITTLE: That was when I was getting ready to go and Kissinger said, "We won't send them any." It was a question of the aircraft flying to the northern part of the country. I've forgotten what the issue was.

Q: *New York Times correspondent Henry Kamm had said that there was a gross mismanagement of wheat relief--or one of the perennial famines there. Tombalbaye had said, "The hell with you," and rejected our wheat.*

LITTLE: And then Kissinger said, "Okay, we'll take our planes out of there." That's what happened.

Q: *There was also the charge--which I guess is probably true, it's a normal thing--that aid people had been charging the Chadian government for their hotel bills or something like that?*

LITTLE: I don't have a recollection of that.

Q: *There had been a famine, I take it?*

LITTLE: That is correct. Yes. In the central parts of the country.

Q: *Because of President Tombalbaye's action, we had stopped sending wheat?*

LITTLE: I think that was in September- October of '74. I got there in mid-November.

Q: *So you didn't arrive at a very auspicious time.*

LITTLE: A little bit of history but the new chief of mission had no connection with it, of course, so I could sort of ride out that one.

Q: *Sometimes it's handy, for no person's fault, when the new chief of mission comes it often is seen by the people you're coming to signifying a change of policy. Or at least being used for that purpose so that you felt that you -- could you take advantage of this somehow?*

LITTLE: I didn't think of it as a current issue at that time.

Q: *Could you describe a little how you saw Chad. The government was run by a ruler who was very much running things. How would you describe the country? It's a big country.*

LITTLE: Yes. 496,000 square miles.

Q: *What was the situation with the people?*

LITTLE: They had very little opportunity. Ineffective bureaucracy. But the Chadians were very nice people.

Q: *Was there a difference between the northerners and southerners?*

LITTLE: Very much so. At that time the southerners ran the government to the considerable resentment of northerners. There was an insurgency in the north at that time run by the northerners.

Q: *Was Libya playing a role in that?*

LITTLE: No.

Q: *Later Libya became sort of a mischief maker there.*

LITTLE: Very much so.

Q: *Libya was not a factor in those days?*

LITTLE: Except about a year before that, they claimed a strip of land at the north. But there was nobody there anyway. The basic problems were really this insurgency in the north.

The French, you may remember, had 3000 troops there. They were the dominant ones. The French Ambassador, regardless of his seniority, was always the dean of the diplomatic corps. There was a French woman who had been kidnapped by the people in the north and held there. French television had flown in some people from the north. Not through the capital. They recorded something about how she felt, she was weeping. That was on French television. The French Government, again with 3,000 troops--both Army and Air Force--right outside the capital. The French provided what they called non-lethal equipment to the people in the north. The leader of the insurgence in the north was a gentleman by the name of Habré. He is now president of the republic. He was the one who kidnapped this lady archeologist. The French Government providing this so called non-lethal equipment infuriated the then government of Chad which was a military government after the coup d'état. The government told the French to take their troops out within 30 days. This was a definite break with France and the French Ambassador was no longer the dean of the diplomatic corps. There was a change in ambassadors, and when the new man came in he was not dean. The insurgency went on and

eventually there was civil war--considerably after I left. Then Habré became the president. He won. The northerners won.

*Q: You had been there not quite six months when there was this coup on April 13th, 1975. What happened to you? What was your experience during the coup?*

LITTLE: On a Sunday morning at about five o'clock my wife went out on the balcony from our bedroom--she said, "Is that thunder?" It was a perfectly clear sky and I said, "No. That's gunfire." This was at five o'clock on that particular Sunday. It wasn't too far away. It lasted about three to three and a half hours. Then it got quiet.

Meanwhile, our own defense attaché had come by the house. We talked about it a little bit. The DCM's residence was right next door--we talked. The assistant attaché went by and picked up the secretaries who lived fairly close to where all the gunfire was and he brought her safely back. I listened to what was going on on the local radio. There was a street just outside the residence that lead to the presidential compound and where I was downstairs I could observe activity on the street.

Finally, at about nine or nine-thirty in the morning, a whole bunch of troops came in trucks from the direction of the presidential compound and they cried, "We've won!" I said to myself, "Who's we? Are they the president's group or the army that had 'won'?"

At around two o'clock that same day the DCM and the military attaché said if it was all right they would like to down to our chancery, which was downtown. I told them it would be okay. They went and looked around. There wasn't much going on, but they got into the building and then came on back.

The fight was entirely internal. No foreigners were involved. We just laid low--"stand fast."

*Q: In the older government with Tombalbaye, did you have any relations with him?*

LITTLE: Very few. During ceremonial functions he would always be pleasant--such as greeting Mobutu when he came on a State Visit. That sort of thing. They lined up the so-called diplomatic corps on the airport tarmac. It was all very pleasant but never any substantive discussions. I talked to the foreign minister sometimes on substantive matters and other ministers. Literally almost by the time I had made my formal calls, they'd changed the government.

*Q: Was there any problem of recognition or anything like that with the new government?*

LITTLE: Continuity--that was the way we did it when we didn't want to make a stir. Continuity--continuing relations with the new government.

*Q: Did Washington have any instructions?*

LITTLE: Yes.

*Q: What sort of instructions were they?*

LITTLE: I've forgotten. We probably sent a message in saying that the new authorities appeared to be in control and recommended that we continue relations with them. After authorization from Washington, we would have sent a note to that effect to the Foreign Office. About two or three days later the new president called the diplomatic corps and consular corps together to tell them about what had happened and to tell them that everything would be all right.

*Q: Was there any real change with the new government?*

LITTLE: No. But it was more open. I remember the new military Junta had a reception for, I guess, chiefs of mission and a few others. This was after we had resumed and continued relations. There had been this meeting called by the president and I said to the Chief of Protocol, "Are we now able to call on ministers and other people in the new government?" He said, "Everything is normal." Of course, it wasn't normal but what he was saying was there were no formal restrictions and we could go out and make our appointments with the ministers. Which we did.

I called on the new foreign minister who had been a major in the army. He had his combat boots and uniform on when I called on him. He was a much more outgoing person than the former foreign minister. He was friendly, smiling and very bright. My relations with the foreign minister were personally closer than they had been with the other one who was a pretty unapproachable type of person.

*Q: Was our interest in the country at that time minimal?*

LITTLE: Yes. The Soviets were there. They were pretty unobjectionable. The Soviet ambassador did the proper things in terms of inviting us over for dinner and a show of Russian propaganda films and that sort of thing. Friendly.

The Soviet ambassador said, "Let's play some volleyball together." We had a home-and-home arrangement with the Soviet Embassy for volleyball games. They beat the hell out of us. They really did. They had a trainer of volleyball to train the Chadians. He did not play, but he was a very fair umpire. We had home-and-home and they would offer beer and Vodka. Everybody was very pleasant, and we did the same thing in return.

*Q: Were you there when the Peace Corps was there?*

LITTLE: Yes. They were there when I arrived. Fifty of them.

*Q: How effective was the Peace Corps?*

LITTLE: As I remember they did two basic things. Well drilling--show them how to get water. Which was pretty important. And English language instruction. You wonder what are we doing teaching people English but the well drilling was good, and there was reforestation. They were

involved in those things. As I said there were fifty of them. There was never any problem with any of the volunteers. They did a good job.

*Q: Did we have an aid program then?*

LITTLE: We had an aid program. Basically on the development of agriculture--wheat--the details escape me. The aid representative was enthusiastic but in my judgment he was a bit of an empire builder and he wanted this program, that program, that program. My feeling was that if we got the Chadians sold on a largish program and the results were minimal we would suffer. So I insisted on a very gradual, careful increase in "X" number of experts, up to a certain level--I've forgotten what it was, but not outstanding in terms of people all over the countryside. Not at all. Just get the Chadians' expectations so high that we couldn't fulfill them. I thought we'd lose.

*Q: Was there concern about what was the effect of any of these programs on the spreading of the desert--the drought area, or not?*

LITTLE: I wasn't there long enough to get into the assessment stage. I thought a lot of them were worthwhile. Then they would sort of go ahead. I just don't know what happened later on.

*Q: Things were on a fairly even keel when you were there, outside of having a coup in your backyard?*

LITTLE: Yes. And the new military government was interested in buying weapons from the United States and I thought the French should be doing that.

*Q: When the French had their 3000 troops kicked out within a month, and all that and the French Ambassador put in his place by the government there wasn't an effort on our part to try to step into their place then?*

LITTLE: It's a former French colony, and commercially, and in other ways they were the dominant power. As a matter of fact I thought we should not step in, as you said, on that contrary, just to be there--some minor help but don't in any try to supplant. The French came back during the Libyan incursion--2,000 troops came back plus aircraft. I think the aircraft were important. By that time we had given them military assistance, but I assume in tandem with the French.

*Q: There was no particular pressure from the military attachés to get more involved? Or CIA, or anything like that?*

LITTLE: Negative. CIA had a special role there but not relating to that at all.

**RICHARD A. DWYER**  
**Deputy Chief of Mission**  
**N'Djamena (1974-1977)**



*Richard A. Dwyer was born in Chicago, Illinois in 1933. He completed an A.B. degree at Dartmouth College in 1955, and then earned an M.A. degree in Public Affairs at Princeton University in 1957. After college, he went directly into the Foreign Service. Mr. Dwyer's overseas career included posts in Syria, Egypt, Bulgaria, Chad, Guyana, and Martinique. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on July 12, 1990.*

*Q: What was the situation in Chad at that time. We are talking about 1974-77.*

DWYER: The President of Chad, Tombalbaye, was one of the last, if not the last, remaining civilian presidents of those west African countries that had become independent in 1960. All the other countries had had their military coup d'etats and the military or somebody else had taken over. Tombalbaye had managed to survive principally by splitting up the opposition into several groups. For example, we not only had a Chadian army, we had a frontier force, or militia, a gendarmerie and a presidential guard, each of which was a counter balance to the others.

Secondly we had the French army. Chad sits in the middle of the African continent and had the largest airport in the area. It is the airport where most north/south African traffic stops. So we had one or two regiments of the Foreign Legion there and at least one other regiment, and we had an on-going civil war that went in fits and spurts and had been since shortly after independence.

Chad, like the Sudan, is one of the African countries that is Arab in the north and black in the south. The belt that became famous because of the drought in those years, the Sahel, basically is that belt that goes across Africa where to go north, the crops need irrigation and to go south they do not. Of course it was the movement of that drought belt south that brought the horrendous famine as it has done before. The black population became the governing population upon independence, offsetting centuries of de facto if not actual Arab rule. The Arabs of the north had always considered the blacks as inferior citizens from the time of slavery--and I wouldn't be a bit surprised if there were still some black slaves somewhere up near the Libyan/Chadian border.

Although the French alleged in 1923 that the country was pacified, it never really was. From the Mediterranean straight south to Chad, are traditional caravan routes that are still used by trucks and landrovers, which go right through civil wars and everything else, so you would find in the bazaars of the capital, N'Djamena, dates from the north and carpets from Turkey, etc. at most times during the civil war. Tombalbaye had appointed black governors to the north region and from a time when the Arabs could consider themselves first rate citizens they in some respects became second class. This area of northern Chad had never been pacified. You went up there at your own risk.

As a matter of fact when we arrived in Chad there was the Cloust affair. Madame Cloust who was a French wife of an archeologist, I guess she was an archeologist herself, he and a couple of West Germans were being held hostage by Hissen Habre and the rebels in the north. The German government simply flew an airplane in and brought their countrymen back. Of course, the Chadians immediately broke relations with Germany which the Germans didn't particularly care.

But this the French couldn't do because this was their client state. In effect the French were paying for the government of Chad. The only money crop to speak of was cotton through which most of their foreign exchange came from, but most of it was subsidized by the French government. At the same time we had Conoco, an American oil company, looking for petroleum, which they actually found up in the desert and in several places, and this had the prospect of making the Chadians possibly independent in terms of foreign exchange at least. The American government had very little interest other than the fact that it was an American company.

There was a small AID program there. We were putting in about \$10-15 million a year. The program really wasn't formally established until after I got there. We also had 50 or 60 Peace Corps volunteers--an excellent program. Superb young people and some not so young. I still rankle when I think of these kids out in the boonies where there was no way we could get them back if they got sick and really wanted to come back. When Nixon commented about the Peace Corps being a draft dodger's paradise, or something, I often wished he could have seen these kids up there, because I thought the world of them. Strangely enough the harder task you assigned them the better they did at it. Sometimes the ones in the city got into trouble, but the ones out by themselves did a superb job. We ended up doubling the program until I finally had to cancel it.

The Chadian government wanted from us basically what every government in Africa wants, and that is some money, please. After the overthrow of Tombalbaye, which was a military coup d'etat despite the fact that he had gotten the forces divided... He was overthrown and I will never forget it because I had sat there on a Friday in this largely modest little country. However, the situation was tense. I talked to our military attaché and our station people and our political people--is this guy going to last or not? We weighed the pros and cons--he had just jailed the top militia, gendarmerie officers and top army officers. I sat down and said you know maybe I should just say nothing but that is not what I am paid to do out here. Maybe there is somebody who is interested back there. I wrote a long analytical piece that said that in effect I think he is good for another 3 to 6 months. I gave it to the communications clerk, and of course we were still dependent on telex there we didn't have radio communications. Went home. About 3 o'clock Saturday morning the firing begins and I said to my wife, "God damn it to hell."

My house was between the army camp and the President's lot. I went out and stood on the road and the troops were going by, and the shooting, etc. Boy, was I ticked off. There was a French intelligence colonel across the street from me. He walked over and I said, "Are you doing this?" He said, "If we are, I don't know about it." I think the answer was that he may have known about it but he wasn't doing it. At about that time the commanding general of the Chadian Army pulls up and he says, ignoring me, to this French intelligence colonel, "Which way do I jump?" The colonel says, "I don't know, but jump one way or another." So fortunately, the general jumped the right way. Tombalbaye was overthrown, he was killed in his bungalow and his body was taken up in one of the old Chadian Air Force DC-3's and jettisoned somewhere out over the desert so that it could not be a form of pilgrimage.

*Q: What happened to this new government? This was not the Habre government?*

DWYER: No, basically what happened to the new government is that it lost the war. The government was composed of military officers, Felix Malloum, who had been in jail and had been a general, became the president. The Foreign Minister had been a Lieutenant Colonel in the Guard, but all of them had been in the French Army at one point or another. Most had served in Algeria and a few in Vietnam. They were basically military men who simply could tolerate this highly corrupt and incompetent government no longer as is often the case only to find running the government is much more difficult than anyone had imagined. For the most part they were decent people.

I will never forget the independence days, which I lived in dread of after the military took over. I had heard rumors about the first one to the effect that the whole cabinet was going to jump out of an airplane and land in the stadium for the independence day parade. I laughed at it, but when independence day came, the whole cabinet jumped out of this airplane and did a pretty good job of it too. They were all paratroopers.

On the second independence day--by then things were getting to be a little dicey. My daughter was home from school, from prep school abroad, and so she and my wife had decided to take advantage of the long weekend and take a look at the animals in the game part in the Cameroon. I was, therefore, a bachelor there. The independence day parade reviewing stand there...

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The next ambassador, Bill Bradford, came as a fresh breeze. He was an old African hand and he asked if I would stay on another year. I said with the greatest of pleasure. Except for the horrible diplomatic incident I involved his wife in when he first got there, why we got along wonderfully well.

*Q: What was the incident?*

DWYER: Well, the French Ambassador had our new Ambassador and the whole Embassy over for dinner shortly after their arrival. Our Ambassador decided to reciprocate and we had the whole French Embassy staff over for a lovely dinner. Jody Bradford, who was an effervescent, attractive, active, good looking blond woman, who was great fun, had at the time pretty rusty French, but this didn't stop her from using it. Here we were having drinks before dinner and the French Ambassador's wife and Mrs. Bradford were talking. Jody grabbed me by the arm as I am going by and says, "Dick, what is the French word for mattress?" Thinking quickly I said "matelot" and went on my way. The French Ambassador's wife had said, "How are you getting on in Chad?" And Jody had said we love it. The only problem is she said that we have the most uncomfortable bed in the world and we have finally gotten a new mattress for it and it is nice and firm and has made all the difference in the world. Now I had just told the Ambassador's wife that the French word for mattress was "matelot" which happened to be sailor and not "matelas" which was mattress. A series of giggles came out of the circle surrounding my Ambassador's wife. Unfortunately, she couldn't figure out what was so funny, but the new firm "matelot" made all the difference to her happiness in Chad. Fortunately she had a wonderful sense of humor. Outside of that we got along wonderfully well. It was great.

*Q: Before we finish this, was there a Libyan problem at the time you were there or did this develop later?*

DWYER: Yes. There was always a Libyan problem. Around 1939 the French government had made an agreement with the Italians about the border between Libya, an Italian colony at the time, and Chad. The fact of the matter was that--I don't know why it was particularly important to either government, it probably was not, because although it composed 10 percent of the area of the country of northern Chad it was mountainous terrain that was home to a few nomads and to the various caravans proceeding north and south. The agreement was signed, but never ratified. I guess the war came along or the government changed or something. After Chadian independence this became a matter of contention between Chad and Libya once again. Of course, the Organization of African Unity and its members had decreed that they would accept colonial borders as established by colonial powers for the simple and good reason that if they all, as new nations, tried to redefined their borders they would collapse into anarchy and civil war.

Chad was that was part of West Africa that was leftover after everybody took what they wanted--the rest of it they just called Chad. So you had something like a hundred different dialects, the President was from a village a few miles from the Foreign Minister's and the common language was French. The two lingua francas were French and Arabic. Anyway, according to one story there was supposedly traces of uranium found in the mountains. Well, I suppose there may have been some traces there, but uranium has not been in short supply for quite a while and there is no other really good economic reason that I know of for attempting this except for Libyan aggrandizement and the hope that here was an inferior and even weaker power that perhaps they could dominate and bully. They had with them, in those days, the Chadian exiles, Hissen Habre and what have you.

As a matter of fact I came across a letter in our files from Hissen Habre applying for a Ford Foundation fellowship because Tombalbaye had said to all the Chadians who had been students for five and six years in Paris that enough was enough. If they couldn't learn what they needed to know in five or six years it was too bad, they had to come home. Habre was one of those and he applied for a Ford Foundation fellowship and we turned him down. I suppose if we had given it to him he would never have been Prime Minister of the country. In any event all those people were being given board and room by Qadhafi. Although at that time the Libyan Army was not actually in the country, Qadhafi had built an airstrip and a base just north of the disputed strip. There was no question that he was supplying and supporting the rebels. But as I say, these people in those areas have been rebels for the last thousand years. They are merchant bandits. The difference was that instead of having camels and Enfield rifles they now had landrovers and machine guns which made quite a difference.

The Chadian army was poorly equipped and organized. The Air Force had World War II fighters, A-6s. They came to me for parts. Upon asking the Pentagon about parts for these propeller driven aircraft, I received a telegram which said that they had located six of them but the museums wouldn't sell them. These were piloted by French pilots under the table and, of course, when--the French do these things so much better than the Americans, it is just infuriating to me that we have not learned how to do these things better. The French had no problem with their public opinion or anything about it and there was no way that I personally felt that we

should get involved in this thing. The French would support the Chadians to the extent that it furthered French foreign policy interests which coincided largely as I thought with our own.

Felix Malloum, who was President, I think had a certain respect for me personally because I had held the fort on the grenade attack on him or so he thought, it didn't actually happen that way, but anyway he came to me and said, "We appreciate your economic aid and we value it but there is no point in trying to use economic aid 'til we have the country pacified because it was just being ripped up once again. What we really need are arms and training." I had to say to him that it would take a Presidential decision that this was in the best interest of the American government. There is no way that Congress could see to it to agree that these interests are in the national security interests of the United States of America. He said, "Dick I know that, but that is not what I want. I just want \$50 million under the table just like you are doing down there in Angola, etc." I said, "Huh, Mr. President, we don't do that." And it wasn't two weeks later than some scandal broke in the United States about \$50 million to the former Portuguese colonies and was all over the newspapers. He said, "You see? That is all I wanted. I wouldn't have leaked it either." This destroyed a lot of my credibility.

He at that time decided that he was going to the United States and plead his own case. I had this embarrassing telegram to send back that President Malloum was going to pay a visit on the American President next Friday. Someone came back with a cable saying he could not receive the president--which I had already told Malloum would be the case, but had agreed to send the telegram anyway--but, we would be happy to receive the vice president and the American Vice President would be happy to meet with him. This was ten times better than I ever thought we were going to do. I sat there and wrote a long telegram back to the Department saying that it was my personal feeling that in no way do we want to get involved in the Libyan war or the civil war...

We agreed we would accept the Vice President of Chad who promptly went off with recommendation from the Embassy that in no way do we give him any encouragement that we were going to take sides in what in essences was a civil war and secondly that there wasn't going to be anything we could do to help him militarily--that was the policy paper of the Department.

Somewhere along the line, however, the Chadian Vice President came back to me and said I had a wonderful visit and the Vice President has agreed that we should receive aid and he is working on it and I want you to let me know as soon as something comes through. I wired back and said, "What happened?" I got my reply, and I'm still not absolutely sure what happened, but by the time I could get back myself and talk with people--the story was that the Vice President did indeed tell him that and time passed before anybody caught it. Then they went back and redid the memcon so that he didn't quite say that and here I am again

*Q: This is an important thing to remember because we are in a way substituting for documents. Somewhere for future historians there is going to be a memo of conversation in which originally someone said something, but when people look at it closer they realize no, we shouldn't have said this--the thing can be rewritten. This is, of course, the substance of much of what the paper documentation is.*

DWYER: I have no idea whether this actually happened or not, this was the scuttlebutt of what I was told when I could get back and talk with people who supposedly knew.

In any event it made life very difficult indeed in the field. We ended up finally, after I left, in giving them some training assistance, which I have been a strong foe of in three countries unless we do the damn thing properly. The problem is you tell them that we will give them a grant of \$100,000 which sounds like a lot, but what it will do is train two sergeants on how to run a motor pool. Now that is not what they have in mind. They may need it, but that is not at all what they had in mind. They would like some pilot training, which I think we eventually did. But it takes some time to train a fighter pilot. Basically they wanted help in fighting their civil war. We didn't do ourselves any good, particularly. Didn't hurt terribly, I suppose, because the government fell not long afterwards.

Things were getting dicey again and my wife was saying, "When I lose count of the coup d'etat it is time to go home." She had been shaken up by the fact--we had gone to a party at one of the embassies, a bridge party. I was feeling a little under the weather and besides I don't like playing bridge in French particularly anyway. We left early and the guy who took the place at our table and his wife were machine gunned as they were crossing the square that we crossed a half hour before. It would have been us if we had been there. That got my wife kind of excited although she is pretty good.

She was stalwart, you know, during the first coup d'etat. She took in all the wives and the families--we had about six in our house and none at the Residence I might add. So we had a house full of people. She is pretty good--not all that nervous.

Then on the second anniversary, as I said before, we got to the parade and the tribunal was up there. The President and the Vice President were in the first row, second row was the cabinet, third row the diplomats, and again I was Chargé and in the third row, and everybody else was sitting there. The tribunals....

I saw the guy throw what I thought was a rock at the President. The rock turned out to be a fragmentation grenade and when it exploded I was torn between, typical Foreign Service bias, because it hit all the press, I am sorry to say I didn't realize at the time, but several of them were killed and it was kind of messy. Then I'll be damned if the guy doesn't heave two more grenades at us. Some misguided patriot on the fourth one grabbed his arm and patriot and grenade thrower disappeared in small juicy pieces together.

I had been extraordinarily fortunate because I was sitting behind the Minister of Health's wife and she was a great big broad woman. She got pretty badly hurt but I just ruined my last blue suit and the papers I had. I being kind of fat by this time decided that I would simply lie on the floor for a bit, which I did. By the time I got up, I was the last one on the viewing stand. In front of me where the crowds had been--I might say that all this time the army was there waiting in formation for the parade to begin. Ambulances came and took away the wounded and the dead and picked up the pieces. Out in the Place de (inaudible) again are two thousand pairs of shoes where the whole African population had run out of their sandals. I have a slide at home that I took showing nothing but shoes out there.

The whole diplomatic corps and cabinet had gone over the rear of this reviewing stand which was about, by the time you had the rail up, about 8 feet. They were all arms and legs. The Italian had landed on the Egyptian, and the West German had landed on the East German and there were shouting and cries. I said to myself in isolated splendor out in the reviewing stand, I think I will go home. I wonder where my car and driver are. So I am walking down the steps of the reviewing stand when the Soviet Ambassador comes charging up and says, "Dwyer, I just want you to know that I would not have left the reviewing stand had it not been for the fact that my wife was with me and I wanted to get her to safety." And I know Sally is in the Cameroon and I said, "Ambassador Sokolov, let's go home and have a drink." He said, "Well, why not." About that time the Chinese Ambassador appears out of no where. He speaks no known language beyond Chinese. With the Chinese there the Soviet can't leave and I can see a crisis brewing here. Then the French, East German and the West German came back. The Vice President came back. So the seven of us and the Vietnamese head of security sat there and reviewed the parade. I was just dying because I knew the whole diplomatic corps was sending out telegrams and here I was stuck reviewing the bloody parade for two hours.

My wife and daughter were in the Cameroon and it, of course, hit the radio which mistakenly said a few diplomats had been killed. Sally gets in the landrover and with my daughter, secretary and chauffeur charged back over to the river only to find that the border is closed and that there is no way you can get across. Sally, therefore, hired a dugout canoe and with my secretary, who was a woman about 63, enormous who always wore a girdle, I never saw her without one-- Lavona was a lovely person, a dedicated Foreign Service secretary--Lavona was in the front end of the canoe with the paddler in the rear and my wife and daughter in the middle came across. The next day she walks in the door and I am having a glass of champagne with the new East German Ambassador because it was his turn to call on me. We are sitting there in air-conditioned splendor drinking champagne. My wife comes in with her hair down and muddy up to her knees and she looks in and says, "Are you all right?" I said, "I'm fine Sally." And she says, "God damn you!" It is hard on family.

**WILLIAM G. BRADFORD**  
**Ambassador**  
**Chad (1976-1979)**

*Ambassador William G. Bradford was born in Illinois in 1925. He joined the U.S. Army in World War II and then attended the University of Indiana for two years. He joined the Foreign Service in 1952. Ambassador Bradford's Foreign Service career included positions in Italy, Vietnam, Zaire, Sierra Leone, Washington, DC, and an ambassadorship to Chad. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1989.*

BRADFORD: Actually, I'd like to go a little later in my career when I was responsible for the aid program in Chad. This was after everybody in the world had become aware of the problem in the Sahel Desert. It's the southern reaches of the Sahara Desert. The desert is creeping south, it is

being overgrazed, which helps the desertification. People were starving to death. It had been bad rain years, and everybody was in there saying, "We've got to help these people. We've got to do something about the Sahel."

When I got there, there was an aid program on the books to give the Chadians something like \$23 million the following year, in 1976. There was no way the Chadians could use \$23 million in any intelligent fashion, nor did our plan provide for any way for them to use it. It was just a figure that somebody had gone to Congress with and said, "Let's give them \$23 million."

We had a very widespread little, inefficient programs. Some were agriculture. Nearly all of them were well intentioned, but they weren't doing anything, nor were they really addressing any of the problems of the Sahel. We had a tree project, which is a fine idea, to put trees along the southern edge of the desert. But in total, it would cover maybe two miles of an area that needed 1,500 miles of trees. There was no provision of where it would go from there. Somebody just sort of hoped that it would all work out.

But the biggest thing I found was that between 80% and 90% of our costs were costs for American personnel. They had conferences, they had tremendous staff requirements, and I didn't think we were really going to do anything about the problem by spending that kind of money for American people to go into an area that they were unfamiliar with.

*Q: This was 1976. What were American interests in Chad?*

BRADFORD: Again, like Sierra Leone, there weren't any interests in Chad. Chad was a place in the middle of Africa, it was before we got very concerned about Colonel Qadhafi and his interests in Chad.

*Q: Colonel Qadhafi is the head of Libya.*

BRADFORD: Right. It's on the northern border of Chad. They seized a contested piece on the border called the Aozou Strip, and still holds it, and was supporting various rebel groups trying to overthrow the central government. But it was not a matter of great interest to us. It was part of the Sahel, and we were interested in the problem I alluded to before, of the desert creeping south and the great threat. But these were about the only American concerns.

*Q: Did you have any instructions from Washington when you went there?*

BRADFORD: No, none. There was a monumental disinterest in Chad or what happened in Chad, which made it a wonderful post to be the ambassador in, because you could really be an ambassador. You could throw yourself almost back a century and do what you thought was proper, because nobody really much cared.

*Q: How did you find the staff at the embassy when you got there?*

BRADFORD: The embassy staff was A-1, very, very small. Besides myself, there was a DCM, one junior officer, an administrative officer, a political officer, and that was the officer staff.



There were two secretaries, three communicators, and then a rather large aid mission of 40 people. There was a Peace Corps of about 200 to 250. The military attaché and one non-commissioned officer, a cultural affairs officer, and that was about the total staff.

*Q: Did you find that they gave you good support?*

BRADFORD: Absolutely. By and large, it was a good staff.

*Q: Could you describe the government, or governments, when you were there? What was the political situation?*

BRADFORD: When I was there, there had been a military coup about three years before, and there was a military government, ministers, a president, all military officers, all of whom their background came from the southern part of the country, being the black portion of the country, the northern part being the Arab portion of the country. Like Sudan, it is divided right across the middle, and several other African countries have the same problem. It was a tremendously deep problem, one that was just not going to go away overnight.

Historically, the northern portions of these countries dominated the southern part. The southern part was slaves, was inferior to them, and the northerners still feel this way.

When the French and the English came into the area, they tended to find the fringe of the desert more inhabitable, and therefore, they lived there and educated the people around them through missionaries and other means. Therefore, the blacks have better education than the Arab portion. The blacks have better health and have much higher birth rates. Therefore, any time you go to a "democratic" system, the blacks tend to win and basically outvote the Arabs. This does not sit well with the Arabs at all. They think it is a natural thing that they should be the rulers. In addition to which, in a very short time with this deep division, the south tends to start taking advantage of the situation, seldom by any kind of outright persecution. The blacks tend to take advantage of a situation when they win an election, and it's not by persecution of the northerners, but by small things. For instance, in Chad, the government passed a tax on cattle. You had to pay so much for every head of cattle. That applied throughout the country. Only one problem: the cattle are in the north. So the northerners ended up paying all the taxes, and the southerners didn't have to pay much. Actually, this one tax started a revolution in the country, and several armies rose up in the northern part of the country to contest with the government for control of the little country. These armies--and there tended to be several--as a matter of fact, by the time I was there, there were 11 different armies, each with its own leader, each with its own views on how things should occur. They went in and out of alliances with each other all the time, but you were talking about 11 different forces trying to keep track.

The most prominent army was the one that came out of the area very far north, called the Tibesti. It was run by two men. One was Goukouni, the other was Hissen Habré. They were number one and two, in that order. Then Goukouni decided that Habré, who had been educated in Paris, was smarter than he was, particularly in public relations, and he'd make Habré the general, and he'd be the second man. This lasted for a number of years. These two received a great deal of support across the border from Libya, and were a very effective rebel force.

The two men had a falling-out somewhere along the line, and Goukouni decided he wanted to be in charge again, and he threw Habré out. Habré ended up without any backing at all, all by himself, in the northern part of Chad. He is probably one of the most remarkable guerrilla leaders of this century. In 30 days, he was back with a new army, beating both the government and Goukouni. This army was no tribal thing or anything else; he was a leader who was able to inspire other people to follow him out into the desert, and he's good. As a guerrilla leader, he's good.

About this point, the government decided, "Here is an opportunity. Maybe we can do something about this whole situation. We shall now have a government of national union." They asked Habré if he didn't want to join, since he'd fallen out with Goukouni and was now denouncing Qadhafi. He said, "Sure, I'll join." So he came back into the city and they formed a new government, in which Habré was to be the vice president. This lasted for a few months, at which point something happened. We're not quite sure what happened, but something made Habré think that the government was going to try and arrest him or assassinate him. Fighting broke out between his followers, who had followed him into the city, and the government forces.

Up to then, most of the fighting had been off in the north. Now the fighting was in the city itself, and very violent fighting between these two factions. Goukouni moved in with his forces from the north, sat on the outside of the city, waiting to see who was going to win. The other eight armies were taking advantage of the situation in their own locales, so they were up by Lake Chad or out in the east. It became a very confused situation.

In the actual fighting, Habré finally prevailed and took over the government himself. The president, a military officer got the country. Several of the others fled into temporary exile. But most of them are now back and are now part of Habré's government. It was during that particular stage of fighting that my time was up in Chad.

*Q: During this time, was this of no particular interest in the State Department?*

BRADFORD: That was true, except for the safety of the Americans when fighting started in the city. We evacuated everybody in Chad, except about eight of us who stayed on in N'Djamena. Then everybody got out.

*Q: How had you and your staff evaluated Habré at the time?*

BRADFORD: We had agreed, up to a limit, as I say, that he was a tremendous guerrilla military leader. We were very suspect of his abilities to run a government. He had not shown in that brief time that he was in there, although he was a smart man, that he could really run a government, which is different from running a guerrilla army and fighting, than running a government on a daily basis. He seems to have learned a lot or be doing much better since then.

*Q: We really didn't care who won?*

BRADFORD: No. As a matter of fact, one of the high points of the whole thing, I was caught outside of Chad when the actual fighting started. I was making a special inspection for the secretary of posts in the Sahel. We had a great many problems in the aid program and so forth, and they asked me, when I got back on leave in the States, to make a special inspection of all of the posts in the Sahel. So my wife and I had driven from N'Djamena over through northern Nigeria into Niamey, Ouagadougou, and Bamako. All along the way, we were plagued with stories that things were getting worse and worse in Chad. While we were there, actual fighting broke out in Chad. I kept calling the State Department and asking what was going on. They'd say, "Everything's calmed down now. Everything is fine." I finally got to Bamako, and I called. I said, "How are things going?" They said, "We're evacuating the post." I said, "You're what? You're evacuating the post?" I said, "Well, I'm going back." "We don't think you should do that."

At that point, I cut off communications with the Department, and I flew to Paris, from Paris back down to Cameroon. I chartered a plane to N'Djamena, flew up to the border of Chad, and crossed French troops going back into Chad. I set up operations there, in time to supervise the evacuees on an airplane and leave.

*Q: This shows a little bit of the problem of communications in a place where, one, you can't talk to your post, and, second, you have to talk to the State Department. Then to get from hither to yon, you have to go from Bamako in Mali, and then you had to fly to Paris in order to get back to the Cameroon, to get to Chad.*

BRADFORD: This is still the case although throughout Africa. Very few flights go east and west on the continent; they all go north and south.

*Q: What did you do when you came back during the coup?*

BRADFORD: We set up in two different residences in town, at opposite ends of the town. I stayed in the residence with three or four people, and my DCM stayed at the other end of town in another place with the same number of people. We had pretty good radio contact. One of the first things I did when I got back, I sent a note to Habré, to the Imam, to Goukouni.

*Q: Imam would be . . .*

BRADFORD: The religious leader of the Moslem, very strong with Habré. And four or five other leaders that I knew. The note basically said, "Look, fellows. We have evacuated all the Americans from the country except eight of us. We are in two residences, here and here, well marked. We are completely neutral in this fight. Whichever side wins, it would be a disaster if anything happens to the Americans that are left in the town." I had a DCM who was a man of great local knowledge and real courage, Tony Delcimer. Tony personally delivered these notes to each of the fighters. There was sort of a lull in the fighting, but there was still an occasional outburst of gunfire. During the next three weeks, in which fighting became extremely heavy at some times, and the residence itself was located between the president's palace and Habré's line, so they found around us and over us and so forth, a big residence with thick walls, so we weren't in terrible danger or anything, but it was noisy. They scrupulously respected the residences. At no time did they come into it or shoot at us directly. A few ricochets was all.

One night, close to the end of the three-week period, I looked out in the garden and there were a bunch of troops coming over the wall. I thought, "Oh, my, they're going to come in here and set up a machine gun and mortar, shoot at the other side, and the other side will shoot back." The officer came up to the door and banged on the door. I went to the door, and he apologized for cutting through my garden, but he had some wounded men, and the fighting on the street was too heavy to evacuate him. They went across my garden, over to the other wall, and disappeared. That's the only time they touched the residence. When you think that the people were fighting out there on the street, 50 yards away, were brought up in the desert, the idea of neutrality and the American flag couldn't have meant beans to them.

Q: *Absolutely not.*

BRADFORD: What it meant was that Habré had said, "Don't touch that house!" (Laughs)

Q: *It shows discipline.*

BRADFORD: It was incredible.

Q: *When you think of the Congolese situation, the troops just ran wild.*

BRADFORD: Correct.

Q: *In Uganda and other places.*

BRADFORD: A very different situation.

Q: *What was the French role in this, as you saw it? What were your connections with the French?*

BRADFORD: I had excellent relations with the French ambassador, who was one of their outstanding ambassadors. They have a situation similar to ours in the Foreign Service. They have a career ambassador called the ambassador of France. There's only one officer in Africa that's ever borne this title, and that was their ambassador in Chad, ambassador of France. They have a different quirk on it. Once you're an ambassador of France, you are not only an ambassador for life, you're on full pay for life. So no retirement. They don't use you, maybe, but you're always on full pay. At any rate, he was an absolutely magnificent man, but he, in effect, was semi-ruler of Chad. His army supported the government. As long as they supported the government, the government did well. When they decided they didn't want to support them quite that well, the government had to start negotiating. They put pressure on them to negotiate with Habré and the government. I think they were surprised that Habré had taken over quite as quickly as he did.

Once the actual fighting started, they found themselves protecting a portion of the town with most of the Europeans in it, strictly on a defensive role, to take care of the Europeans.

Q: *You're speaking of French troops.*

BRADFORD: Yes. The French Embassy was there, and most of the French people were there. It was strictly a protective gesture.

*Q: Did you find yourself deferring to the French ambassador in policy measures?*

BRADFORD: Not so much in policy measures. I would defer to him socially. He was the ranking man, so far more important than I was. In fact, he was that much more important in the United States. We had policy differences, and we had a very nice gentlemen's agreement. There were things that occasionally I couldn't tell him, and there were things he couldn't tell me. We never pressed these items. We got along very well.

Let me go one step further. There was another thing that I think should be noted for our historical record. When it came time to evacuate all the Americans from N'Djamena, since I wasn't at the post, but my DCM sent me messages that it was time to get out. The US Government started dithering. "Should we send military planes? That might be misinterpreted. Should we charter a Pan Am plane? That's expensive." While they were still dithering, the French ambassador arrived. He said the French Air Force was coming in to evacuate his civilians, and he would be more than glad to take the Americans out at the same time. Where did we want them to go? He was taking his people to Libreville, and it was getting a little crowded, but if we wanted ours to go somewhere else, that would be fine. So the French Air Force evacuated 400 or 500 Americans to Yaounde in Cameroon. There was never any question of a bill being submitted for this. As you know, when the Americans evacuate one person of another nationality, we bill the government. All I could think of is some allies still know how to behave like allies.

*Q: I think this is also interesting, that when all is said and done, in normal times, the French can be . . .*

BRADFORD: A pain in the neck. (Laughs)

*Q: A burr under the saddle. But when the chips are down, they can be relied on to do what we would say is the right thing. I hope they feel the same about us.*

*This is an unclassified interview, but did you feel that you received good support from the CIA?*

BRADFORD: Yes. Excellent. I always maintained good relations with them. I always maintained a modicum of control without being too nosy in things they didn't want to talk about. My support was excellent.

*Q: How did you view the threat from Qadhafi and Libya at that time in Chad?*

BRADFORD: The Chadians were terribly concerned. By the time I'd been there a while, I was concerned in the sense that he was probably going to take over Chad or try and take over Chad. Was this important to the United States? The answer was probably no. It didn't really matter if Qadhafi took over Chad. It didn't matter if he took over part of Niger, too. Obviously, he couldn't

take over much more than that without getting terribly over-extended. There aren't that many Libyans.

*Q: Did you find that there was more concern, say, in the United States from the State Department and Congress?*

BRADFORD: That grew, but it grew basically after I left. When I left, they were still not terribly interested in what was happening.

*Q: Is there something I might not have covered from your time in Chad?*

BRADFORD: No, I think that's about it. We've pretty well covered it all.

**JAMES R. BULLINGTON**  
**Deputy Chief of Mission**  
**N'Djamena (1979)**

*Ambassador James R. Bullington was born in Tennessee in 1940, and received his BA from Auburn University in 1962, when he entered the Foreign Service. His assignments abroad include Hue, Saigon, Quang Tri, Chiang Mai, Mandalay, Rangoon, N'Djamena and Contonou, with an ambassadorship to Burundi. In 2001 Ambassador Bullington was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy.*

BULLINGTON: At this point Chad was in the midst of a civil war, which had been ongoing to some degree ever since independence in 1962. It was in a particularly heated phase at that time. It had been at first between the Muslim north and the Christian and animist south, but by this time the Muslim north had by and large won that struggle and had chased all the Christians out of the north, including the capital, N'djamena. However, various factions of the Arabized, Muslim north were now fighting among themselves. The two principal ones were called the *Forces Armées Populaires* (or FAP) under Goukouni Oueddai, and the *Forces Armées du Nord* (or FAN) of Hissen Habré. They had reached a very unstable cease-fire, and the two principal factions along with a couple of smaller factions had formed a so-called coalition government in N'djamena. However, it was just an armed standoff, and the government was not real. By this point, mid '79, we had evacuated dependents and closed the Peace Corps program, but we still had the core staff of the Embassy there. We were in between Ambassadors, so when I was sent there as DCM I immediately became Chargé. This was a big responsibility for a brand-new DCM who had never been in the country or even in Africa. I did the best I could. Eventually, after about four months, we got an Ambassador.

*Q: Who was that?*

BULLINGTON: Don Norland.

*Q: Well now, when you went out there as charge, who was there to talk to in the government?*

BULLINGTON: There were plenty of people to talk to, but there was no government. You could talk to one faction and they'd tell you one thing and another faction would tell you the opposite. The Minister of Health was illiterate. It was that kind of government, just warlords and their lieutenants. They were backed by their militia armies occupying different parts of the capital. These armies included lots of twelve and fourteen year old kids with AK-47's. They also had some heavier weapons, mortars and the like. They had nominally formed a coalition government, but it was as close to anarchy as you could get.

*Q: Well now was Qadhafi playing games?*

BULLINGTON: Yes. Qadhafi had at one time or another supported all of the different factions and was very much involved in the civil war, stirring things up.

*Q: What were American interests there*

BULLINGTON: Very few that I could discern. We were interested in what Qadhafi was up to. Also, this was before the Cold War was over, and we still had Russians and Chinese and others to worry about there. Chad had even then been talked about as a potential source of oil. Subsequently they found some, and they're now producing oil there. But other than that, few American interests. The French were Chad's principal patron. They had an airbase just outside of N'djamena, secured by a battalion of the Foreign Legion, and they were the main players there politically and economically. We had a fairly substantial Embassy, but not as big as the French.

*Q: What was our relationship at that point with the French there?*

BULLINGTON: Pretty good. We didn't have any serious issues with them. I would describe relations as good if not cordial. We worked together well, had no conflicts.

*Q: But I suppose also you saw them as being a refuge, a source of stability or something?*

BULLINGTON: Yes, we really looked to them to help in emergencies, and in fact that's what eventually happened. In the spring of 1980 the government, such as it was, totally collapsed and war broke out again, right in the middle of town, between the two major factions, Goukouni and Habré. As we reported, the FAP had hit the FAN. There was heavy firing all over town. They weren't after foreigners, but we were right in the middle of it. Most of the fighters were these 14-year-old kids with AK-47s, not trained, not disciplined. Also, they were firing mortars and 'Stalin organs,' World War II era rocket launchers they had gotten from the Russians by way of the Libyans, which are very much an area weapon. You aim it at a city in general, and it may hit that if you're lucky. So this stuff was falling all around and we were in pretty dire straits for awhile. It certainly was dangerous. This is where my experience in Vietnam proved very helpful. Basically that's why I got the job, because they knew that this sort of thing was possible, and they wanted somebody who knew something about being in war and had proved that they don't panic under fire. That's indeed what was needed. I was able to help a lot of people who had not had that kind of experience to do the right thing, that is, to tell them you don't run out in the

street and try to get away from it. With mortar shells and gunfire coming in you get in a corner with strong walls and cover yourself up and chances are you're going to get through it. So I was constantly on the emergency radio, and was able to calm several people who might have done dangerous things otherwise. We were able to get through the fighting without losing anybody. This went on for three or four days before the French and we could arrange a temporary cease-fire so foreigners could move out from town to the French airbase. We got there safely, and the next day the French flew us out to Douala.

**DONALD R. NORLAND**  
**Ambassador**  
**Chad (1979-1980)**

*Ambassador Donald R. Norland was born in Laurens, Iowa in 1924. He joined the Foreign Service in 1952. His career included positions in Morocco, the Ivory Coast, France (NATO), the Netherlands, and Guinea, and ambassadorships to Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, and Chad. Ambassador Norland was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1993.*

*Q: What were our interests in Chad, and what was the situation? We're talking about 1979 to '80, when you were there.*

NORLAND: That's right. In 1979, our interests in Chad could be quickly summarized: Chad was Libya's neighbor, and Qadhafi was having a field day. He had been relatively successful economically in his own country, and was trying to do things to elevate himself to a position of importance in the world generally. He was a player in Middle Eastern affairs.

I maintain that the most understandable explanation of why Chad became important was Qadhafi's strategic goal of a Pan-African Islamic Community (PAIC). This theory has often been reported and I've never seen it refuted. There are other explanations but I contend that the PAIC explains much of what Qadhafi does. It's mystical and unreal. But he believes he has a role in uniting the Arab-speaking people of that region. And, of course, the region extends all across the Sahel. Qadhafi wouldn't stop at Chad or Niger. He's supported dissident movements in other countries as well.

Qadhafi has supported every one of Chad's thirteen political parties, in one way or another. Whether they were from the south (which is to say, antagonistic to him), or Arabic-speaking in the north, he supported them in his efforts to destabilize the country and expand his influence.

Libya is a huge territory, but with only about three million people. Chad, the fifth-largest country on the continent, has some five million people, all but a couple hundred thousand in the south, where you have rivers and arable land. It was called le Chad utile, or the useful part of Chad. (That contrasts with the north, which was considered to be the useless part of Chad.) There was a dispute with Libya over the so-called Aozou strip, a band of about sixty miles wide along the frontier between Libya and Chad. Qadhafi thought he had the right to claim that territory, and legal disputes arose over its status. There were rumors it contained uranium.



Another interest in Chad was petroleum. When I arrived, there was a CONOCO operation centered about seventy-five miles northwest of the capital of N'Djamena. They had found oil and were ready to pump it. They had plans for a pipeline to take it to the outskirts of N'Djamena, where they were planning a mini-refinery. The production would be enough for Chad's internal needs. That would have been a tremendous gain for the country, not to have to buy petroleum products abroad. This was also a very important factor because it was an American company. (CONOCO was not just American; they had a French dimension to that whole operation.)

Other than the Libyan interest and this small American commercial interest, there was little to hold our attention in Chad.

*Q: You were there during the end of the Carter term. Did we see this as a battleground between East and West?*

NORLAND: Oh, yes. During the Carter years, I'll have to say that interest was not great. We were preoccupied by other events.

I can give an example. On the 7th of November 1979, the Iranians took American hostages at our embassy in Tehran. That sensitized people to a whole new set of issues in the Middle East, including the influence of Khomeini and what we now call Islamic fundamentalism. We were in a sensitive position in N'Djamena, because Sudan was next door, and Sudan had become a minor ideological battleground. We were closely associated with Gaafar Nimeiri, the president of Sudan. Our aid reached some two-hundred-and-fifty-million-dollars in the early '80s. That's a tremendous investment. We threatened to lose that investment if Qadhafi gained influence and there was talk about his outflanking Sudan. There were other strategic considerations. The Carter administration was on the defensive due to events in Tehran, so we were lying low.

Those events had their repercussions, the most important of which came in March of 1980. Hissen Habré was the minister of defense in the government of President Goukouni, a person of limited experience and education. Habré had three degrees from French universities; he was chafing at the idea that he was subordinate to this barely "literate" man from the north. So Habré took up arms against Goukouni on March 20, 1980; fighting began in the streets of the N'Djamena, being the capital and the only infrastructure worth fighting about.

We holed up, and at the end of three days, we were urged to get out of there. The Department was afraid (I've been told subsequently) we might become the second group of American diplomats held hostage by unfriendly forces. The French still had about eight hundred soldiers stationed at the airfield on the outskirts of N'Djamena. They also had an effective emergency evacuation plan. After three days of shelling we were encouraged by radio (we had voice radio to Ghana) to get out of there. By this time a dozen people were camped in the residence. Late on one afternoon we got into cars and drove through the streets.

We got out with no casualties. Very fortunate, because there was a lot of fighting going on. The city was in flames. Thanks to the French, we got to the airfield. And the next day, I was flown out on a French Trans-All to Douala, Cameroon, with my wife and three or four other embassy

people. The French had things well organized, they could offer you the option of flying out or driving out. They had put a temporary bridge across the Logone River, a couple of miles from the city. So the defense attaché took the official car and drove out to Cameroon, where he used the car for many months.

We got out, and that changed things. This becomes of some interest because the government that we left behind was still headed by Goukouni. He called on the French military, in May 1980 (it was March when we left), to withdraw, saying their presence disrupted efforts to reach a negotiated settlement. Hissen Habré was still in the country in the south part of town. In June 1980, this same Goukouni turned to the Libyans and asked them for military assistance to help drive Habré out of the country. And they succeeded in driving Habré out in the fall of 1980.

By that time, we saw the Reagan administration coming. And the Reagan administration looked at this array of forces, and saw Goukouni, still the legitimate president, and remembered that he had called on Qadhafi to bail him out. And the Reagan regime decided to find an alternative to Goukouni.

This was an interesting "contra" movement.

But the point is that Goukouni, by the fall of '81, saw change building. The OAU (Organization of African Unity) people, as well as other outside influences, got to Goukouni and said, "Look, you're creating a serious confrontation with various countries, including the United States and France, by allowing Qadhafi to have this influence." Libyan forces were actually occupying as far south as N'Djamena. They were almost co-responsible for government in N'Djamena, the capital.

I could provide further details on this, but the fact is that in late October of 1981, with Habré driven out of the capital thanks to the cooperation of the Libyans, Goukouni turned to Qadhafi and said, "You have completed the mission for which I requested your assistance in June of 1980. Now please leave." And Qadhafi left. Within two weeks, all Libyan forces were gone from Chad. Those forces had already become very unpopular, because, like any military occupying force, they act arrogantly and made themselves very unpopular. And they left.

By this time, however, the United States had decided to help Habré return to Chad. He had taken refuge in Cameroon with about half of his military (we estimate maybe two or three thousand people) and in western Sudan where he was poised on the border. And about this time, American aid started to flow, the result of a Casey decision.

*Q: What was your impression of the Chad government?*

NORLAND: I arrived there just weeks after the first coalition government had been negotiated. It had been announced in August of 1979, thanks to the initiatives of the French. I was the last ambassador to deal directly with these parties: the president, Goukouni Oueddei; the minister of defense, Hissen Habré; the vice president, Mr. Abdul Krden Kamougi; and the coalition. I was able to assess the strengths and weaknesses of these parties. And throughout the time that I was in the Department I was asked by Dick Moose, the assistant secretary, to monitor what was going

on in Chad. So I kept fairly close tabs on what was happening, making recommendations, etc. I actually went to countries bordering on Chad, on a couple of occasions. I followed it very closely. And then, when the new administration came in...

*Q: This would be the Reagan administration.*

NORLAND: The Reagan administration and Crocker came in. I was alert to the underhanded scheming. I asked what the new administration intended to do, and I was giving them my best advice. As a matter of fact, I have here some notes that I made at the time, and I thought I might quote from them.

*Q: Yes, would you quote, please.*

NORLAND: This is February 7, 1981, for a meeting with Assistant Secretary Crocker. The issue that I wanted to discuss was the support that was brewing for Habré as the "preferred faction." And I made a note to myself: "In my contributions, I have set forth pros and cons, always concluding that Habré is the least desirable anti-Libyan faction." I did agree that if the diplomatic options failed, we might return to Habré, but that, for the time being, he was not popular and we should not support him. And I gave various reasons. I refer to the recurring references to support for Habré as the preferred priority, by the Reagan administration. Under the heading of Aiding Anti-Libyan Factions I wrote: "I feel strongly that helping Habré should be viewed as the least desirable expedient, one that should be undertaken only after the diplomatic option has been given at least several weeks to work itself out. There are two principal reasons. First, Habré is the one prominent politician who has no political future in Chad."

I should add that Habré's movement was unpopular because he had committed atrocities in the south in 1979, and was known for that. He could not travel in the country south of the capital because his forces were detested. Habré was a guerrilla fighter, an excellent guerrilla fighter, but he was not a politician. He had no sense of compromise. He was an aristocrat. Incidentally, he came into power in Chad on the 10th of June 1982; he was thrown out on the 3rd of December 1990. When I heard that he had been thrown out, I understood why and had, in effect, anticipated it. Habré could not govern except by brute force, and thus antagonized many people.

I tried to keep the Reagan administration from putting its eggs in the Habré basket. I didn't succeed. And that's one of the reasons that I retired. I felt that I didn't want to be associated with this.

It was a misguided decision that cost the United States a total of perhaps a half-billion dollars to put Habré into power and keep him there for eight years. And the costs are still coming in. We took responsibility for several hundred Libyans whom we're still supporting somewhere.

*Q: Just to finish up on this, could you tell a little about your experiences at the time of the fighting there, what happened and all.*

NORLAND: Well, I'd be happy to talk about that. It was challenging.

I had contact with all three of the major political factions. I had made a point of calling on the Imam, the head of the mosque of N'Djamena, a huge establishment. The Saudis put in something like ten million dollars, twenty years ago, to build a really magnificent mosque. And when the fighting loomed in March 1980, when it appeared that there was going to be an outbreak of fighting, I made the rounds or telephoned to these factions. I went to see the Imam. Because I didn't speak Arabic well enough, I took a local employee as interpreter. I was trying to warn them all that for a country struggling for survival (because Chad really was in very bad shape economically), it was folly for whatever reason to allow their country to become an arena of armed competition. They had developed certain qualities of tolerance but from the time of independence in 1960, there had been terrible mistakes made. Now that the Front for the National Liberation of Chad (FROLINAT) had taken control of the country, a new government had won the day, and it was time to focus on economic development. This was my line to everybody who would listen.

One of the specific arguments that I used at every step was to point out that this little oil well was close to operation in the north. The World Bank loan would make possible the pipeline and the mini-refinery hinged provided they could reach some kind of a peaceful agreement. But this would not go forward if there was continued fighting. No one would want to invest, no one would be able to work. That was one of the points I kept raising in the dialogue that preceded the final outbreak of fighting: that you don't have the luxury of fighting out your differences; you have to compromise.

Goukouni had willingly made one concession. In the agreement that brought him to power, the agreement of August 1979, he said, "I agree to have elections in eighteen months."

That was a fair arrangement. Why couldn't Habré have waited for those elections? Why did he have to take to the streets?

One of the reasons, I'm sure (in addition to the psychological reason that he just could not bear, with all of his education, to be under the domination of what he called this "illiterate" from the north), was that he was getting psychological support from the United States.

We can understand this only by using a great deal of imagination. What made the United States think that this little arena of Cold War competition was so important that we should actually depose the country's president? A president I was accredited to. He was also the president with more legitimacy than any other political figure because he had been brought to power by political dialogue.

*Q: But at the time of the outbreak, what happened at the embassy?*

NORLAND: We closed up the embassy on, I think it was, a Thursday evening, fully expecting to go back to work on Friday morning. The fighting broke out about four in the morning.

We had a couple of people who couldn't bear to just sit and listen, and tried to go out in the streets. Fighting came close and they retreated. Then the warring parties started shooting off Stalin organs, as they're called.

Q: *Yes. rockets, cartouches.*

This had started on Friday morning. By Sunday afternoon, we got word from the French that they expected a cease-fire, that the parties were exhausted, and that we should be ready to move at any time.

We had the misfortune of not being able to burn everything at the embassy. We also had the misfortune of having had an exercise where we had burned down to the prescribed thirty-minutes' burn, but our Agency friends had not carried out their part of it. So we had a lingering problem for several months as a result of concern as to what might have been captured in the way of documentation. We feared that Goukouni might have made the information available to the Libyans. And so we did have a festering problem there for a while, but we couldn't do anything about it.

Anyway, we drove by the embassy; we drove by the burning cathedral, the burning grandstand steps, burning houses and wires across the street and soldiers wandering aimlessly with their guns at ready. But they respected our white flags, and we got as far as the French Embassy, where the ambassador was in the process of reforming these convoys and sending us the last mile to the airport. After a half an hour of discussion and deciding the priorities and conditions, we made the last run. Once we got on the air base, it was a perimeter that the French were ready to defend. And we had quarters in what amounted to barracks.

I'll never forget that night. They invited us to dinner, and there at dinner was a bottle of wine. That's the French!

**PARKER W. BORG**  
**Country Director, West African Affairs**  
**Washington, DC (1979-1981)**

*Ambassador Borg was born and raised in Minnesota and educated at Dartmouth College and Cornell University. In 1965, after a tour with the Peace Corps in the Philippines, he joined the Foreign Service and was posted to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. During his career he served in Vietnam and Zaire, and in the State Department in senior positions concerning Vietnam, West Africa and Counter Terrorism. He served as US Ambassador to Mali (1981-1984) and to Iceland from 1993 to 1996. Ambassador Borg was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2002.*

Q: *What about up in Chad? While you were there, were the Libyans messing around?*

BORG: No, when I was there, the Libyans were in the background, but a civil war had broken out in Chad early in 1979. The original problem had been between the southern Christian animus factions and the northern Arab Muslim groups. There's a dividing line across the Sahel between the Arab Muslim in the north and the Christian Black in the south, most pronounced in Mauritania and Chad, but it goes down into Nigeria and hits the Ivory Coast. In '79 the

Christians had withdrawn from N'Djamena and pulled down to the southern part of the country, which left two, then three, then more factions in control of N'Djamena. There was a continuous series of struggles between the different leaders, the different groups, some having more Libyan influence than others. In fact, when I made my trip there in June, I arrived right in the middle of the fighting and there was a battle that took place each night that I was there, in which the different factions were trying to eliminate each other, but they were all Muslim factions at this time. They had pretty much destroyed the city of N'Djamena. There were two main players, a man by the name of Goukouni, who was considered closer to the Libyans, and a man by the name of Habré, who was closer to the French, among the Muslim factions. They took turns being in the preeminent position. We watched the situation and tried to keep track of who was doing what, but we had no interests in Chad which would warrant the introduction of any resources at this time.

*Q: Did the French have the equivalent of what we had in Paris? We had an African watcher in Paris, I think. Did the French have an African watcher in Washington? Did you have any contact with French embassy officials?*

BORG: I'm sure I did, but they didn't maintain the same level of portfolio or interest as we did at the embassies in Paris and London. What was more significant was that the French had an office in Paris, which was not part of the Foreign Ministry, which was closer to the President's office, and there was a figure, often a dark figure, who went around solving problems, organizing French interventions in the former Francophone Africa. Again, it was fascinating to see the different roles that the French and the English had taken in their former colonies in the post-independence period. The English felt they had left their British values and just wiped their hands and walked away, and the French seemed far more intent on maintaining a cultural presence, a linguistic presence and, in those cases where they could, an economic presence. So the French remain very strong in a place like the Ivory Coast or Senegal, which had moderate governments that were prepared to work with the French, but even in a place like Chad the French felt that they had a responsibility.

*Q: While you were there, did we have any feeling the French had gone too far or should go farther or do anything, or were we just carrying a watching brief?*

BORG: I don't think we had a clear vision of that. We on occasions worked with the French; on occasions we didn't work with the French. The French showed great interest in Nigeria because of its oil and they looked to be expanding their interests in Nigeria, but for most of the Francophone countries we didn't particularly have any great interest and so we were not too upset that the French did maintain economic interests and provide stability in these countries. Also, anyplace where the French were located, life was generally much easier for the people in our embassies than it was in places where the French had not been present, because there was a tradition of bakeries and imported wines and things that were generally available, and the French subsidized the economies in these places, as contrasted with the places where the English had been where, once the English were gone, the markets subsisted on local produce.

*Q: You were there during the Carter period. Obviously one of the hallmarks of the Carter Administration was human rights. Did you have any problems?*

BORG: Well, there were many hallmarks of the Carter Administration: I think human rights and representative government on the political side, and on the economic side basic human needs and trying to promote development from the bottom up. On the human rights front, there were no pronounced problems like ones found in Iran or other places where there were large numbers of dissidents that were held in prison and their rights were being deprived, so human rights was not the issue in West Africa that it might have been in other states. There were no strong police states at that time that were repressing their populations. There were police states, but some of them were more benevolent, some of them were struggling, but none of them had been sort of established themselves.

*Q: I don't know if he'd passed from the scene by this time, but in Senegal, Guinea or one of the places along the western, Francophone, there was one quite brutal, well known father-of-his-country figure.*

BORG: Sekou Toure?

*Q: Sekou Toure.*

BORG: In Guinea, yes, he was still on the scene, but he had mellowed. Sekou Toure was the first of the Francophones to throw out the French. They became independent in 1957, and the rest of the countries didn't become independent until 1960, I believe. The French had responded to Sekou Toure's declaration of independence by ripping out the phone jacks and pulling out the lights and making sure that nothing worked. Sekou Toure responded by pursuing a radical socialist approach, but by 1979 this had mellowed and they were beginning to invite back French businessmen, they were trying to build up Conakry and make it into a decent city again. This was not the Sekou Toure of the past. There probably still were some people in prison, but this was not the evil person...

*Q: You weren't having to fight Patt Derian in the Human Rights Bureau?*

BORG: No, she had many more significant human rights issues to deal with in other places.

*Q: Then let's turn to Nigeria.*

BORG: Let me go on with the point, human rights. On the assistance side we had to look at basic human needs, and I felt that we poured more money down rat holes in which we were trying to improve health care or education. It wasn't just that we were pouring money down the rat holes; it's that there were so many basic human needs that we were trying to help all at the same time that we spread our money very, very thinly and did almost nothing that made a difference in any of these countries. There were too many different programs, too diverse, and the whole idea that countries were suddenly going to become prosperous because maybe we could change life in a couple villages just didn't work. A third point: Jimmy Carter was known to have tremendous sympathy for Africa.

Andrew Young was making all sorts of headway with Africans at the United Nations, but we

found that the Carter White House was very, very difficult to deal with when it came to receiving African visitors. The problems seemed not to be with Carter himself but with the people who surrounded him. Jimmy Carter, being an engineer by training, had an intense interest in the details of everything that was going on, and so anytime he became involved in an issue he became very intensely involved and needed to know an awful lot about what was happening. As a result, his staff, to preserve his time, discouraged him from becoming involved in issues that were not of great importance. I remember particularly two meetings at the White House while I was the country director: one, when the president of Sierra Leone came to the United States and, two, when President Tolbert came. Tolbert may have been the first one. We sent over the briefing books, and I remember seeing President Carter sitting over in a corner outside pouring over the briefing book just before the meeting began, and I was thinking, you know, the President really doesn't have to master the details of these things. All these people want is just a picture taken with the President. But there he was, and he was able to discuss the issues, whatever they might have been, in a very intelligent, concerned, forthright manner. When it came to, I think, Siaka Stevens, the person running Sierra Leone at the time, the White House said no, that the President couldn't see him. Our argument for why the President should see him was that Siaka Stevens was the current head of the Organization of African States and that, since the organization had been founded, every single head of the organization, when they came to the United States, had had a courtesy call with the President and that this would be considered a slight. We were working through Dick Moose and the Bureau, but we just could not get Siaka Stevens an appointment. We had to do something, so we called Jackie Kennedy Onassis' boyfriend in New York, Templeton.

*Q: He was in diamonds.*

BORG: He was in diamonds and Sierra Leone had diamonds, and so we explained to Templeton's office that we were having problems with the White House, that they knew, of course, that Siaka Stevens was coming and he was expecting to see the President, and we needed some help at getting an appointment. 24 hours later the appointment was on.

**MARIE THERESE HUHTALA**  
**Desk Officer for Chad**  
**Washington, DC (1981-1983)**

*Ambassador Huhtala was born and raised in California and Graduated from Santa Clara University. Joining the Foreign Service in 1972, she studied Thai and Chinese languages and became a specialist in East Asian and Pacific Affairs. Her overseas postings include Paris, Quebec, Hong Kong and Chiang Mai (Thailand). In Washington, she dealt primarily with East Asia and Pacific Affairs. From 2001 to 2004 she served as US ambassador to Malaysia and, from 2004 to 2005, as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs. Ambassador Huhtala is a graduate of the National War College and the State Department's Senior Seminar. Ambassador Huhtala was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2005.*



*Q: How did the U.S. view Chad?*

HUHTALA: It's one of those situations where there are no real good guys. The southern part of Chad is black African and Christian, the northern part is Berber and Muslim. The riches were all in the south but the government was often in the hands of the northerners; constantly shifting the factional forces. It was a very complex sort of situation.

*Q: How much supervision of this part of the Africa was there? Crocker was terribly concentrated on South Africa.*

HUHTALA: The Deputy Assistant Secretary who really followed that was Jim Bishop. He was the one that our office reported to.

*Q: Jim had the delightful privilege of having been pulled out of two embassies by evacuation.*

HUHTALA: Somalia.

*Q: Somalia and Liberia.*

HUHTALA: Yeah, Liberia too. He was a tough nut. He really was.

*Q: Were there any sort of competing forces about what to do in Chad? Sometimes you get from congress or from the pentagon or from NGOs and all people with their own interest and that. Did you feel any of that?*

HUHTALA: One of the reasons this was such a great job is that it was kind of below the radar in many ways, at least until the end, in my last six months, when the conflict erupted again and the NGOs became very active care and the others were trying to save lives and we were pulling in American relief flights. Shortly after that the French actually sent forces in from their fortress in Central African Republic I believe, from Bangui. It erupted into a big issue in the summer of '83 but in the couple of years leading up to that it was just a country with a lot of endemic problems. No real controversy in how we approach it but a fair amount of prominence within the State Department because of the Libyan angle, which meant people cared about what we were doing.

I loved the job because there was really one person in the whole State Department who worked on Chad full time and that was me. At the end, after I left, there was this cartoon that appeared in the *Washington Post*. It showed a desk with a man sitting at it and it said, "Chad Desk." The guy was sitting there, frame after frame, getting more and more sleepy and finally his head goes down on the desk and then in the last panel, boom, explosion, he's looking around scared. My colleagues wrote the cartoonist and he sent me the original drawing with a little note, "To Marie Huhtala, with apologies for the sex change." I framed that. I had it on my office wall for years.

*Q: Did you sort of talk to or work with the African man at the French embassy? We have an African man at our Paris embassy.*

HUHTALA: Oh you mean the American embassy in Paris?

*Q: We have an African person at our embassy in Paris. I was wondering if the French had an African person in Washington at their embassy.*

HUHTALA: I think they did. I don't remember him. I remember the Japanese use to send over a political officer to talk to me often. Of all people, the Japanese were very interested.

*Q: Well the Toyotas.*

HUHTALA: Maybe those Toyotas. I think they had some assistance programs in the southern region of Chad.

*Q: What would you do? You said you were terribly busy but what did you or could you do?*

HUHTALA: First of all there was whole business of setting up an embassy out of nothing. That took a lot of work. Then we sent in the skeleton staff and we had a European specialist go out as the Chargé. His name was Jay Peter Moffat. I think he had always expected to be an ambassador.

*Q: His father had been ambassador to Canada.*

HUHTALA: His grandfather was Joseph Grew, the great diplomat who was Ambassador to Japan when World War II broke out and later served as Acting Secretary of State after the war. Another ancestor helped negotiate the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1927, I was told.

*Q: Grew was Ambassador in both Japan and Turkey.*

HUHTALA: So Peter had always expected an exalted career. Well we sent him out as Chargé first of all and it was a rough hardship post. I don't think it was what he was used to. I don't think he had served in Africa before. So I did a lot of backstopping for him. For instance, when it came time to write the human rights report he just said he couldn't do it, he was just overwhelmed, so I wrote it in Washington and sent it to him. He looked it over and submitted it. It was that kind of very hands-on of support. I went there, visited the post and checked out what they needed and that kind of thing. Peter did eventually become Ambassador to Chad when, I think it was after Chadian President Habré took over, and we were able to elevate diplomatic relations to the ambassadorial level. Of course I helped him in his confirmation process. At that time I was also back-up to the desk officer for Cameroon and we had an official visit by the president of Cameroon that year so I had a lot of papers to write for that. It was a very active portfolio.

*Q How did we view Hissène Habré? He became the president for some period of time, or he was in and out wasn't he?*

HUHTALA: In '82 he was a white knight. He was replacing this guy named Goukouni Oueddei who had ties to the Libyans. So he fought his way city by city to take over in N'Djamena and we thought this was a good thing. We gave him support. Later on, I haven't followed it closely, but I

know that now he is considered a war criminal because he went down the wrong path after he consolidated his power. At the time he was the one that we were betting on. You remember what the early '80s were like in Africa. There were a lot of proxy wars going on. There was Angola, there was Ethiopia. There was a great tendency by the Reagan administration to see these local conflicts as a sort of proxy being played in the context of the Cold War.

*Q: Did you find yourself trying to analyze what this war with Libyans was about and put it in non-cold war terms?*

HUHTALA: Yes, I think I was always able to see what was going on in the continent on two levels. There were serious indigenous problems that arose from the colonial mess that European powers, especially the French, had left behind. Look at a country like Chad, that's not a natural country at all. It should have been two countries. The boundaries that France left behind were quite perverse, really. Qadhafi came to power as basically a populist dictator with no love of the west. So there were all these kinds of forces that were already in existence there, including a lot of corruption and a lot of tribalism. Then you had the political overlay of Cuban involvement, Soviet involvement, the U.S. seeing it in Cold War terms because we frankly didn't want to get involved in any conflicts on the European mainland where all of those nukes were. I could see both dimensions of that. It wasn't too hard to figure out. I guess the key always was, and this has been true in other parts of the world too, Foreign Service officers as area experts try not to lose track of the sort of underlying dynamics of a situation and make sure that that is reflected up to the political thinkers so that we don't get the two lines too badly out of sync. When you do, you end up supporting repressive regimes that really would not be in your interest to support.

*Q: Was there an aid element to starving or this sort of thing to what you were doing?*

HUHTALA: There had been a major aid mission in Chad before the pullout in '79 and they were one of the first agencies to go back when we re-established relations. They had very large missions in the Sahara obviously, including in Upper Volta and Niger. In most of the countries of the Sahel there were longstanding projects. So they went back in. The Chargé there, later Ambassador, was trying to do what all his colleagues did, to make sure the aid program was rational, that it was reaching the right people and that it would have a good prospect of success.

*Q: After doing this did you get a feel for being an African hand?*

HUHTALA: Well you know, I liked Africa. I wouldn't say I loved it but I would have been prepared to serve a tour of duty there. I was kind of intrigued by it. In fact, an Ambassador once surprised the hell out of me by asking me to go out as his DCM. It was Fernando Rondon. He was on his way to Madagascar. I thought, oh wow, DCM, that's fabulous. I went home and popped it to my husband and he said, "Where is Madagascar?" So I told him where it was, he says, "Well, let me think about it." He went to the library and looked it up and there were only two references in the card catalog. One was for a book that had been checked out 10 years earlier and never returned, the other was for a *National Geographic* issue entitled, "Madagascar, the Ends of the Earth." It said basically that there was no industry there except vanilla growing, and it was in the middle of nowhere. Eino could not see his way clear to going to Madagascar and being without work for two or three years. And what about our kids? They were in grammar

school then. They certainly didn't speak French, which was the language of Madagascar. It just became really clear that I couldn't take that job. The AIDS crisis had not yet popped up yet, but I knew the health situation in Africa was also quite questionable. My kids were under 10; I just couldn't get my mind around to taking them all off to Africa so I had to decline that very nice offer.

*Q: So then what happened?*

HUHTALA: So then I cast my mind back to East Asia. While I had been in Chiang Mai speaking Thai and enjoying the culture there I had been mindful of the strong Chinese influence in the area, in the language, in the culture and all of that. Thailand has the most successfully integrated Chinese population of the whole region so I saw a lot of this there. I thought maybe now was the time for me to study Chinese. I figured I had time to do one more hard language; it should either be Chinese or Japanese. I weighed the two (now this was in early 1983), and I knew Japanese was the language of business and finance and there was a lot of money to be made after the Foreign Service if you were a Japanese hand. At the same time, China was beginning to rise; it was already very important in the region and who knew, maybe it would have a great future. So I went for Chinese. I got an assignment as a China watcher in the political section in our Consulate General in Hong Kong, but before that I had two solid years of Mandarin training, one in Washington and one in Taiwan.

**DAVID HAMILTON SHINN**  
**Chargé d'Affaires**  
**N'Djamena (1982-1983)**

*Ambassador David Hamilton Shinn was born in Washington in 1940. He received three degrees from George Washington University. During his career he had positions in Kenya, Washington D.C., Tanzania, Mauritania, Cameroon, Sudan, and ambassadorships to Burkina Faso and Ethiopia. He was appointed Chargé d'Affaires on two short occasions while Jay P. Moffat was on leave during 1982 and 1983. Ambassador Shinn was interviewed in July 2002 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.*

SHINN: I arrived in Kousseri the day before the Goukouni Oueddei government fell. The rebels led by Hissene Habre took over from Goukouni Oueddei. There were several days of fighting in N'Djamena. The fighting spilled across the Chari River into Kousseri where evacuated staff from N'Djamena and others from Yaounde came under fire for part of an afternoon. We returned to N'Djamena when it became clear that Habre was firmly in control. We established relations with the new president and I stayed for several weeks until Moffat returned. It was one of those opportunities in the Foreign Service when you happen to be in the right place at the right time. If you handle things well in the eyes of Washington, it becomes a career enhancing situation.

*Q: How did we evaluate Habre?*

SHINN: He had been in government before, but never as head of state. Hissene Habre was one tough cookie. He was a fighter. He was reasonably well educated, but didn't have any major academic credentials. He was in charge because he was tougher and nastier than most of his rivals. He was a leader; people did follow him. He led his men into N'Djamena and defeated all other armed factions. I found him an interesting individual and in a roughish kind of way, a likeable person because he knew what he wanted. He wanted good relations with the U.S. I believe there had been some covert contacts with him before he took power. There certainly had been reports of U.S. support for Habre when he started his campaign from the Sudan border. We may have supported him because he was opposed to Chadian elements that were being supported by Libya.

I had a brief and successful relationship with Habre. He remained in power until 1990. He was overthrown by General Idriss Deby. His reign brought a prolonged period of dictatorial stability to Chad.

My tour in Chad came at an exciting time. N'Djamena was basically a destroyed city; the main street was all shot up. It was the Wild West. Incidents of violence continued. I remember playing tennis one afternoon on the embassy compound, which overlooked the Chari River. All of a sudden, I heard things zinging past my ear and realized that they were bullets. We had no idea where they were coming from, but we didn't stick around to find out. The game was quickly called! But that was the way Chad was at the time. It was not unusual to hear live fire filling the air.

**JAY P. MOFFAT**  
**Ambassador**  
**Chad (1982-1985)**

*Ambassador Jay P. Moffat, a third generation Foreign Service Officer, joined the Foreign Service in 1956. His career included positions in Japan, France, Switzerland, Trinidad, and Morocco, and an ambassadorship to Chad. Ambassador Moffat was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1989.*

*Q: Could you describe the situation there? You arrived in March 1982.*

MOFFAT: The government that had been set up was something like a government of national union and was in the process of imploding, partially because of its own incompetence. But also because Hissen Habre, who had retired from the earlier frays and was building up his forces in Sudan and Eastern Chad, was starting his march across Chad towards taking power. We were supporting the government until four or five weeks before the end.

*Q: What had been our history in Chad?*

MOFFAT: Over the preceding few years one of basically just holding on. Twice the Embassy had been evacuated, fortunately without loss of life, but it had been a close thing. Fighting had

raged in the city for months at a time. Chad had been independent since 1960, the French had always favored the South and the South had been left in control. The Northern leaders, who were more powerful, were in the process of asserting themselves and it led to a lot of warfare. The Southerners were, in essence, overthrown, and then the Northerners started fighting among themselves and in 1979 and 1980 we got in the middle of battle and finally we pulled out.

*Q: Was the North-South split sort of equivalent to that of the Sudan where the North was more white, Arab, Islamic and the South, black and animistic or Christian?*

MOFFAT: It was the same pattern that goes all the way from the Atlantic across through Sudan. Hissen Habre, one of the Northern leaders, was in the process of fighting his way back and taking over from a government installed when the Libyans ended their occupation. This was a patchwork government put together under a fellow named Goukouni under international sanction including an OAU peacekeeping force; Senegalese, Zairian, and Nigerian forces. So for the first month or two after I arrived we were trying to help this government. We were giving extensive food aid, for example. Suddenly from one day to the next without any warning we were told--communications were not very good--that the United States supported Hissen Habre. This was rather alarming, for we had our staff there and there were a lot of wild men around town with guns.

*Q: Why was there this change in attitude in Washington?*

MOFFAT: The Department of State, the United States government decided that Habre, who was well and favorably known to us, was going to win and we should support him. I am a great admirer of Habre and have no argument with that, but I did have reservations about suddenly putting a post in the field which has no protection in such danger.

*Q: This is almost unbelievable. Why did this happen? Was this ineptitude? Did we have to make such an announcement. Could we not have cooled it until one side or the other had taken over?*

MOFFAT: I suspect there was considerable debate within the government and nobody thought to prepare the post. There were other people on the circuit. The OAU had to be notified, our allies had to be notified, and word would get back to the Chadians. N'djamena was in many ways a frightening place with several private armies including 12 year-olds with Kalashnikovs. Something of a mini-Beirut. They were hairy times.

*Q: We had already gone through the terrible trauma of the takeover of our Embassy in Tehran and so this was not an unsophisticated era. We are talking about 1982 or so. Did you get any feeling that they were saying "everybody get out for awhile while we settle this"? Did they just tell you?*

MOFFAT: They just told us. They did not tell the Chadian government. Our concern was that the government, such as it was, would find out.

*Q: Did it?*

MOFFAT: I don't know if it did or didn't. The government just tended to collapse. The last few days they kept coming to us to ask, "who shall we put in a new government?" We overnighted across the river in Cameroon when the battle for N'djamena took place. Over the years we had established a house there just for this purpose. We actually came under more fire there by misdirected firing than if we had stayed.

Hissen Habre came into power. In his way on an African scale, he was and is a great man. That spring we had Famine Number One and War Number One.

*Q: You were saying you had your War Number One and Famine Number One?*

MOFFAT: This was in 1983 when the bad Chadians under Goukouni accompanied by Libyans fought their way down to the point where we evacuated the spouses and children. Then miraculously the Chadians fought them off back to the north. The French and Zairians eventually came in and sort of drew a line in the sand and for a long time Chad lasted as a de facto divided country. Habre was very dependent on military equipment from us and the French and we went through some difficult times together. He went up to Faya Largeau where he came from and just squeaked out before the Libyans came in. I saw him under very tough circumstances and once or twice his icy demeanor cracked. I worried that this might undermine my role there, for he is proud of his self-control. But it didn't and indeed brought us closer together, which was useful.

*Q: You were in a close to a combat position. Why would an American ambassador be up in that situation?*

MOFFAT: I did not go up to Faya. Habre had come back. We were supplying a great deal of military equipment. President Reagan in one swoop gave us twenty-five million dollars of military equipment and services under a little known legislative provision that allowed us to draw from the U.S. forces directly. We had equipment, C-130s, C-141s (military transport aircraft) flying in and out. It was the most operational time I have ever had. We spent most of our time at the airport. If it was not military equipment it was food aid. So the assignment was wonderful and fascinating and very much involved with operations.

*Q: How did you deal with Habre?*

MOFFAT: Necessity made me deal with him a lot and then, I think, inclination took over. We both benefited from it. He was a little like the Eric Williams model I mentioned; he wanted people, reasonably intelligent people, he could talk to that were not potential replacements for him. No problem of access. Sometimes several times a week, sometimes a couple of weeks would go by. He wanted to keep in touch and we wanted to keep in touch. He was fascinated with the possibilities of military equipment.

*Q: Sort of like going through the Sears and Roebuck catalogue?*

MOFFAT: At one point we brought him boxes of books on the armaments of the world and he would go through them. The only trouble was that he would say, "I want this. I want that." He is a great man in that he came out of a limited background, a northerner from a small town from a

tribe noted for war and cattle stealing. He got some education and realized that he was a nationalist at heart. In many ways he is a mini-de Gaulle. He lives for Chadian nationalism. He realized that he was going to have to have national reconciliation and national reconstruction. He did a lot of courageous things, bringing an equal number of southerners into the government, a dosage, as the French would say, for goodies and all that. He has brought Chad closer to being a real country than anybody could have believed possible.

*Q: What was the American interest in Chad?*

MOFFAT: American interest was entirely derived from Libya. The Libyans had, before I got there, occupied N'djamena for a year and still was a presence up north. The surrounding black African countries were terrified that the Libyans were going to do bad things to them, coming through Chad. Except for Libya we would have been treating Chad the way we do Niger or Togo.

*Q: Why was Libya picking on Chad? I look at the map and Libya also bounds Niger, the Sudan.*

MOFFAT: Well, from time to time Libya has picked on Niger, Sudan, Egypt and Tunisia. There is a bitterly disputed area called the Aozou Strip at the top of Chad. Moreover Libya has more nebulous claims to a large part of Chad. At various times the Libyans have been thought to want to extend through Chad their way into Africa, whether just Muslim Africa or all of black Africa, who knows? Anyway, they were willing to throw into battle thousands of men and millions of dollars, high performance attack helicopters, high performance MiGs, tanks, God knows. They were estimated to have lost a billion dollars worth of military equipment when the Chadians briefly threw them out of the Aozou Strip two or three years ago. The Libyans, for whatever reason, were willing to expend money and people attacking the Chadians.

*Q: Once it became a matter of the Libyans being in there, there was no doubt of what we were going to do?*

MOFFAT: No doubt. President Reagan gave the twenty-five million dollars and subsequently there were other tranches of this sort of money on top. Also there was a five or six million dollar annual military assistance program. We got into the tens of millions in food aid, many tens of millions. Chad was afflicted by the same 1983 drought that you read about in Ethiopia and Sudan. We were off the rock and movie star circuit so we did not get the publicity. We did, however, do very well. People got the food. By virtue of being a small country, things were easier. The Chadians, unlike the Ethiopians and perhaps the Sudanese, were willing to let the foreigners run the effort largely unhampered.

*Q: Did we have an AID mission there?*

MOFFAT: We had an AID mission. We didn't when I first got there, I was running a \$15 million a year food aid program by myself. I could not even understand the AID messages with their jargon.



*Q: Everyone is taking another look at AID, what are we doing to countries? Are we sponsoring programs that lead to urban congestion and all their problems. Were we looking at where we were going? AID started later there than in many countries.*

MOFFAT: Particularly among some of the missionaries there was the feeling that we were creating permanent handout seekers. And that may have been true in the south, but particularly in the center the drought was so horrendous, the infrastructure was wiped out, wells that had never failed in known history had failed. Livestock had to be killed. It was so horrendous that you could not deny food aid on the grounds that it would affect people's habits of independence. The short answer in Chad was that, sure, there was a lot of discussion one way and another, but the situation just did not permit doing other than coming in and saving lives.

*Q: This is an unclassified interview so I will let you deal with the question how you can. We have talked about AID and the military, how about the CIA, was it helpful, or was this the sort of situation that the CIA could not do much in?*

MOFFAT: There have been allegations in the press, magazines that the CIA had already been involved with Habre when he was out of power. I would note that things were very operational in Chad. There was much activity involving military equipment and the like, and a need in Washington and N'djamena for intelligence of military use. Washington also had a great interest in the Libyan military equipment that was captured.

Let me go back. When we got there there was no housing, no nothing. My wife came three months later. We were all in one small house with holes in the roofs. Living two to three in a room, eating communally. Staffed by "rovers", people who would come in for a month or two to be a secretary or communications officer. Then we grew and started rebuilding. The town was sort of a mini-Dresden. We had to take buildings and rebuild them. We grew but we had the great advantage of being small. There are many disadvantages to being small. Having always had too few people to do what we had to do, I think we did it fairly well. My successor changed my emphasis on lean staffing, and the place has grown mightily since. There was a sense of purpose and the morale was extraordinarily high when we were living under these incredible situations. The first time it rained no one could sleep, the beds were all soaked. There was constant danger of being killed, shooting going on. Then later, documented threats by the Libyans to kill us. That was wonderful for morale and it kept everybody together.

If there were other agencies involved, and over time different agencies were involved, and they all shared the dangers and discomfort.

*Q: We have already gotten part of this in the beginning in which you were not backed up well in Washington.*

MOFFAT: It was not that we were not well backed up. Indeed, there was a disproportion in amount of attention and resources given to Chad and Chet Crocker, the Assistant Secretary (for African Affairs), said that Chad was our one African success for the year 1983.

*Q: I believe it is important to show what can happen. You can't sit on things too long, it can leave a post dangling. You might say this is the same thing as in 1979, "What do you do about the Shah?" He was seeking a place to find refuge and that helped precipitate the takeover of our embassy in Tehran. Your problem came out all right, but it did leave you in an awkward situation. But overall you felt you got good support?*

MOFFAT: We got good support. Thanks to the Libyans, for awhile there we could get anything we wanted and we got a tremendous amount of attention. We were lucky enough so we could avoid non-essential visits from Washington. We did not get Mrs. Bush, we did not get movie stars. The whole time I was there we had one congressional visitor and that was incidental. We could do our job.

**RICHARD W. BOGOSIAN**  
**Ambassador**  
**Chad (1990-1992)**

*Ambassador Richard Bogosian was born on July 18, 1937, in Boston, Massachusetts. He studied history at Tufts University and graduated from University of Chicago Law School. In 1962 he entered the Foreign Service and his career has included positions in Niger Republic, Chad, Somalia, Sudan and Rwanda. Ambassador Bogosian was interviewed by Vladimir Lehovich in 1998.*

BOGOSIAN: There are a couple of things to say about Chad as a sort of preliminary. First of all, on a personal basis, we - that is to say, my wife and I - sort of assumed it was going to be like Niamey, like Niger. The two countries are next to each other. They're both Sahelian. They're both Francophone, both poor, and so forth. But in fact, Chad and the Chad assignment turned out to be very different. It ended up being just about our favorite assignment. As we go on I'll mention the things that made it different. The other things was, of course, our involvement in Chad and what we had been doing in Chad prior to my arrival. In the late 1970s there was a terrible civil war in Chad, something like 11 different militias fighting each other, and this had given the Qadhafi régime an opportunity to pursue what may be regarded as its irredentist designs on Chad. To jump forward, just around the time I left Chad in 1993, the two countries had gone to the international Court of Justice, where ultimately the court found in Chad's favor regarding something called the Aozou Strip, which was a northern part of the country claimed by Libya. So in other words, somewhere between the mid '70s and the mid '90s, Libya claimed virtually all of Chad. At one time they bombed N'Djamena. There was fighting in the north of the country. And yet at the end of this 20-year period the countries had resolved their differences in a way that nobody had every thought possible.

I got to Chad, if you will, at the end of that period, but prior to my arrival the United States had determined that it was important - this was during the Reagan Administration - almost literally to draw a line in the sand and say to Qadhafi: no more. My sense is (although I wasn't involved in that at the time, although having served in Niger and having served in the Sudan, where, if I remember correctly, we talked about Qadhafi attempting to overthrow Nimeiri) I was well aware

of the danger that Qadhafi posed to his neighbors, but I had not been involved in the Chadian thing. What I knew was that the United States had played a leading role in, if you will, blunting the Libyan advance. I was not privy to everything that had happened in Chad in this context. I also knew - let's say it was "common knowledge," quote-unquote - that the Reagan Administration had seen Qadhafi as one of those demonic leaders who needed to be stopped and, if you will, the corollary of that was that Habre, as the leader of Chad, was one of the heroes.

And one of the things that made Habre different was his courage, his willingness to stand up and fight, in an environment, particularly in the 1970s, when so many of the Third World leaders were either buffoons, like Idi Amin or Bokassa in the Central African Republic, or would just try to squirm out from under any commitment. Habre stood up and fought, and in fact, he was spectacularly successful in defeating Qadhafi and the Libyans.

As a result of all that had gone on before, there were two or three things that, if you will, were in place by the time I got to Chad. One was an important French military presence, what they called the Epervier Force, which meant, I think, 'nighthawk' or some kind of hawk, I forget the exact translation [*épervier*= 'sparrow hawk']. It was their name for it. It was about 1,000 French troops, including some aircraft, that were based in Chad. And that, of course, on the one hand, if you will, anchored the French connection even more than in other Francophone countries and, in another sense, meant that if things really got tough in Chad, the French military were there, and that made a very big difference. Secondly, by the 1980s, we were very much involved with Chad. We had an important AID program. We had economic support funds, which is one of the measures of political relationship, substantial amounts of money. We had provided military assistance and a close political relationship. Prior to my arrival, Habre had visited the United States and had had a state visit and so forth. The third thing, though, was that by the time I got there, first of all the country was more or less at peace - it had been at peace for close to 10 years by then - but the rebuilding effort after the civil war was still underway. There were still parts of N'Djamena that were damaged, and there were still rebel groups here and there of one type or another. In that sense, it was not truly stable. But two things had happened. To my surprise - mind you, this is the Bush Administration - when I started getting briefed on Chad, I was told that the Bush Administration wanted to somehow separated itself from Reagan in Chad. In short, I think the Bush Administration had concluded, without actually making a big point about it, that the battle had been won and it was time to turn our attention to other matters.

Now in 1990, during the time I was getting ready to go there, the Bush actions regarding Iraq and Somalia had not yet taken place. That was later in 1990 and 1992. Perhaps there were rumblings in the Middle East that I was unaware of, but certainly while I was doing the Paris Club, which was really at the time when I was told to go, we frankly had what we thought were very good relations with Iraq, and in fact, in the Paris Club, because we were not a creditor (because the Iraqis paid their bills to us), we were not forced to agonize over Iraqi debt as most of the other key Paris Club countries did, and we were able to avoid joining that issue and, at the same time, maintain food sales, among other things. So the crisis in the Persian Gulf and the crisis in Somalia came while I was in Chad. But in any event, the idea of maintaining the kind of posture that was true under Reagan was changing, and I don't think that was so much that we were stopping aid programs - although some of the programs, like ESF, were beginning to come to an end - rather, the idea of lionizing Habre and making him into a hero began to diminish. Frankly, I

don't know quite what the reasoning was, but I got the feeling, based on the way I was told, that it was more of a desire by the Bush Administration to find ways to distinguish itself from Reagan and Chad was one of the places where that was being done.

But the other problem was that by 1990 it was increasingly impossible to ignore Habre's human rights record. There were allegations of thousands of people in unspeakable conditions in jail, literally across the street from the AID mission - which was later proven to be true - and we were less and less comfortable dealing with them. Now in the real world, those things don't just begin and end. There were people who still either had a stake in Habre's success or continued to admire him for one reason or another. There was, if you will, a certain momentum to our relationship. But at the same time, different groups, particularly Amnesty International, were very upset about this. They were beginning to complain about the administration not being willing to take up human rights with Habre. And as you recall, in the early 1990s in the West generally, there was a growing feeling that democracy and governance were places that deserved our attention. What that means is that as I was getting ready to go to Chad, on the one hand I was looking forward to the positive environment, to having a mission that had several programs underway, but I also knew that one way or the other I had to tackle the human rights issue.

What I did was I made it a point to visit Amnesty International to engage them in dialogue, and I did that throughout the three years I was there. Also in my swearing in speech and when I presented my credentials, when I did an interview for the Voice of America, I mentioned the fact that human rights were among the things we cared about. The idea was to begin to let Habre know that I was not going to avoid the human rights issue. Now that said, I wasn't exactly sure how to do this and at the same time establish a workable positive relationship with him.

The next part of the story is, at one and the same time, the turning point of my three years in Chad and one of the most exciting and interesting periods of my whole Foreign Service career. By the early 1990s, there was a group based in western Sudan led by Idriss Deby. They were mainly Zaghawa tribesmen from the far east of Chad. Deby had been one of the two or three military figures who helped push the Libyans out. Again, I'm sorry I forget some of the names, but there were two or three Zaghawa military officers who were the real leaders on the ground in the military campaign. They were fearless; they were effective. One of them had died by then. But there was a falling out. Somebody said what it was all about was division of the spoils, and Habre was a Gorane from Tibesti, and Deby was a Zaghawa from the northeast. They were both from the north. They were similar, but they were somewhat different, and in any event, Deby had taken up arms against Habre. The previous year there was a real scare - that is, the year before I got there. Deby had crossed into Chad, and Habre had gone east and rallied the troops, and they pushed Deby out again. On Veterans' Day, 1990, the secretary-general -

Q: *Which was October?*

BOGOSIAN: Veterans' Day - November 11, 1990. I was asked to come to the Presidency, as was the French ambassador and maybe one or two others. We met separately. And what we were told was that Deby's forces had crossed into Chad. Now Deby was thought to be supported by the Libyans, so clearly our inclination was to support Habre, our friend, against this Libyan-backed person. For the next couple of weeks, there was fighting in eastern Chad, in Biltine

Province particularly. And one by one, the government tended to lose these battles. It wasn't clear what was going to happen, because the assumption was that we'd been through this before, and at one point the national army would prevail. Habre went to the east, but instead of rallying his troops, he was nearly caught by Deby, and he literally had to run out of there to save his skin. In some ways that was clearly the beginning of the end. We began to learn that among his most important troops, they either had been diminished through losses of one kind or another - by then they had been fighting a lot, and between those Zaghawa who had gone over to Deby and others who were lost in the fighting, his best troops were becoming weakened, and we began to learn that the other troops were losing any appetite for fighting - we were beginning to realize that the situation was not going well. Now, this is essentially through the month of November of 1990, and in a sense, we were doing two things, other than just reporting to Washington how we thought things were going. We were talking mainly to the French to see if they continued to support Habre, and their ambassador, who had previously been consul general in San Francisco and who had been very warm and friendly to me upon my arrival, assured me that France backed Habre. Now it's generally well known that the French relationship with Habre was never as comfortable as ours. There was a sense that they resented how close we were to Habre. Another thing to keep in mind is that at this time an international consortium, led by Exxon, that included Chevron, had discovered oil. They were exploring for oil, and it was beginning to look pretty interesting, and there was a notion that the French resented that. Now, in fact, the French had had many opportunities to get in on the oil exploration, and they had turned it down; nevertheless, there was a popular perception that somehow part of the American relationship with Habre translated into oil concessions. And so there was a feeling that we had this special relationship with Habre, and in a zero-sum game notion, that meant that the French connection... Now it goes beyond that. There was a famous incident many years earlier where Habre, when he was a rebel in the bush, murdered some French person - I think it was a woman, Madame... I forget her name now, but this was one of those incidents that the French had not forgotten. In short, notwithstanding the presence of French troops and all the rest, that relationship was quite complicated. And it was obviously essential to know where the French stood, and we were told that they backed Habre.

*Q: May I just ask, Richard, in your opinion, when the ambassador told you that, was that also his belief?*

BOGOSIAN: I won't answer that right now.

*Q: Okay.*

BOGOSIAN: One of the things we noticed was that Radio France Internationale seemed to have awfully good information about where Deby was and what he was doing, and normally you wouldn't expect an international radio to have a correspondent in Biltine with this ragtag rebel group. The fact is that I remained convinced that the French aided and abetted Deby's arrival in Chad, and all I can say is some years later in Paris, when I saw that ambassador, he turned his face away and didn't talk to me.

*Q: In awkwardness.*

BOGOSIAN: Yes. It's conceivable, it wouldn't surprise me, that he was not told that he could have plausible deniability, but on balance I think he probably knew.

*Q: It's an important question.*

BOGOSIAN: Well, it is a question. I'm not sure there's an answer. I think the government of France, as a government, however, decided it was time to throw in their support for Deby, and perhaps to blunt the Libyan connection, I don't know. The interesting thing was when he finally did take over, they immediately had planes ready to evacuate us, and they put us in touch with Deby immediately - so it was clear that they had a relationship. Deby, of course, had studied in France and had given blood to a French soldier. Just as there was a complex relationship with Habre, there was a set of relationships with Deby that made it more than just another rebel coming to power.

Now, as I say, it was beginning to look rather bad for Habre, and I was new in Chad, so I didn't understand the implications of every single thing that happened. The fighting was limited to a rather small part of far eastern Chad on the Sudanese border, 600-700 miles away. And it was clear that Habre was in trouble. We had intelligence, and just watching these events on a day-to-day basis made it clear. But what was not clear to me, what I was not able to understand until very late in the day, was how bad it was. And what happened was we were getting concerned, and by late November it was bad enough so that we had authority to evacuate the post. We had what was called permission for an authorized departure. What that meant was everybody didn't have to leave, but those who wanted to or those who were not needed could go, as distinct from an ordered departure, where everybody had to go.

And of course we kept in touch with the American community, and on November 30<sup>th</sup> we had a meeting at about 5 o'clock; and I conveyed the best information and analysis we had, which was that we thought the end was coming, but we thought we still had a few more days. About 9 o'clock, the defense attaché came and said to me that he was told by an important contact that Deby had reached Om Hadjer, which is about three or four hundred miles from N'Djamena. And the defense attaché's contact, who was a high government official, said, "It's over." In other words, in the history of Chad, the rebellion always begins in the east, and by the time they're as far as Om Hadjer it's over.

*Q: I see.*

BOGOSIAN: He understood that, and I did, of course, after the events. Now, what happened then was that the Goranes, which is Habre's people, understood it was over, and they started to leave town, and what they did was they trashed the city. They unlocked the jails; there was shooting all night; there were stolen vehicles. Our house had a common wall with the local Toyota place, where there were dogs to protect it. And during the evening we heard them shoot the dogs. We heard them break into the cars to leave. It was sheer pandemonium. Now for safety reasons, I didn't leave the compound, but we were told that the streets were white with documents that had been poured out of files. As I say, the jails were emptied and so forth, and of course, what that meant was that the Habre régime, which had been in power about 10 years and our good friend and everything, ended.

Now Washington literally had military planes with military assistance on the tarmacs ready to fly, and we had to tell them don't bother, it's too late.

Q: *Dick, why was it too late?*

BOGOSIAN: He was overthrown.

Q: *He was overthrown.*

BOGOSIAN: When it finally happened, it happened very quickly.

Q: *Planes ready to fly with Habre, you mean.*

BOGOSIAN: No, no. U.S. cargo planes with military assistance ready to come to help save it, but they literally wouldn't have gotten there in time.

Q: *Can you share a little more on that? What would the planes have done? Brought in equipment?*

BOGOSIAN: Yes. I failed to say that over the preceding weeks they urged us to provide them with all different kinds of military equipment and that the political decision in Washington was that this guy was worth saving. Now in one sense, from the day Deby crossed until he entered Chad was about three weeks, and therefore, theoretically, we might have done something.

I should say that many of us in the embassy were new and therefore we simply hadn't judged that he would collapse so quickly. Part of that was based on our assessment that the French would support him, which in turn was based on the ambassador's assurances. The other thing was that until the very end his troops were way off in the eastern edge of the country. They really hadn't penetrated. But when it finally happened, it happened very fast. Now I told you that I briefed the American community on our best information. After this happened there were two things we learned. One was that the wife of the French defense attaché called my wife, and she seemed very nervous and ill-at-ease and wanted to know if we were all right. And in retrospect we think they knew what was going to happen and, in effect, she was almost trying to signal to us to make sure we were protected. But the other thing was there was an AID contractor, who was Senegalese, who happened to be in town, and he attended our town meeting and didn't say anything. And later he told people that he had heard Goranes in town saying that they were leaving. And we said, well, why didn't he say something, and he said, "Well, of course, I couldn't contradict the American ambassador. That would be rude."

Q: *Dick, one moment. Could you spell Gorane for us?*

BOGOSIAN: G-o-r-a-n-e. It's a tribal group in Chad. And that was Habre's tribe.

Q: *Dick, you're very candid about this. Was this a difficult time professionally?*

BOGOSIAN: Well, yes and no. It was difficult, obviously, in understanding what to do. It was, on the one hand, extremely exciting, just in the sense that your adrenaline was rushing. When it happened, of course, we were up all night. There were a couple of things to note. One is that the staff was simply superb. Everybody worked their heads off. Everybody did extremely good work. The whole unit just simply came together and functioned as smoothly as one would have wanted. We normally would have had two communicators, but we only had one. The other fellow had not come yet to begin his assignment, and so our one communicator, a fellow named McInturff, who was also with me in Somalia, we didn't even go on minimize, because he just worked all the time. The same with the defense attaché, the regional security officer, all the other people in the embassy. The French, in fact, did have airplanes ready, and the next day about 100 people left, but those who remained stayed on the compound. My wife and one or two ladies that were left fed them every day. About 70 people would eat in the residence.

Q: *Who were these 70 people Dick?*

BOGOSIAN: Those Americans who somehow were left.

Q: *Official Americans?*

BOGOSIAN: Official and AID types and Peace Corps volunteers.

Q: *Regular American community as well?*

BOGOSIAN: Yes, the community. Now maybe my number is inflated, although I thought that was the number. Maybe it was more like 30 or 40. But certainly in those initial days people were sleeping in the residence and so forth. As you know, at a time like that, particularly in hardship posts, people come together, and in one sense there's incredible bonding, incredible mutual loyalty, and it's very exciting.

Now the first part of this was the evening of November 30-December 1, when the Goranes left and Habre was overthrown. And of course, the question was was this just going to degenerate into anarchy? And the short answer was no. The first 24 hours were chaotic and anarchic, and we were on the phone to Washington and everything, but over the next day or so things calmed down. Now I did not leave the compound because of security reasons. Certainly the situation was extremely delicately balanced. But for example, at least for those couple of days, there was enough food to go around, and things quieted down enough to just conduct normal - well, not to conduct normal business, but at least to run the embassy and be in touch with Washington.

The next question was Deby. When was he going to come to town? What were we going to do?

BOGOSIAN: Well, I think it would be better if I can go a little further, because that will help to answer your question, I think.

Q: *Fine.*

BOGOSIAN: What I can say is that whatever discussion and debate took place, the bottom line



is that he was worth saving. To partially answer your question, once he left, there was not much thinking about what do we do with him now? In that sense, you can either say we were cynical or pragmatic. Once it was over, it was over. And this is what I was getting to.

Habre left on the first of December. I saw Deby, if I remember correctly, on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. In effect, what happened was - and I think this must have been worked out by the French, because you'll notice there was no battle for N'Djamena, and what I didn't tell you was that as the situation was unraveling, some of the people who had been through this before in Chad, some of our locals and other employees, were very worried about what would happen if there was a battle for N'Djamena. And I remember saying to a woman, it's possible they'll work out a deal to save the capital, and she said it never happened before. But in fact, that is what happened.

*Q: Save it from what?*

BOGOSIAN: Well, a battle in the city.

*Q: Oh, a battle in the city.*

BOGOSIAN: Again, this is one reason why I think the French had a role to play, because what I think happened was somehow or other, around the 30<sup>th</sup> of November, the Habre people understood that they had lost the support of the French and they could not maintain their position any longer, and they concluded that what they should do was steal everything they could, all the money in the banks, all the money in the treasury and just get out. And that's what they did. And they went into Cameroon and wherever they ended up. I should note that eventually many of them returned, and Habre went into exile in Senegal.

Deby, once he started across the country, he could move as fast as the wheels on his vehicles could turn, and so he got to the outskirts of N'Djamena on the 2<sup>nd</sup>. Maybe I saw him on the 4<sup>th</sup>. I just can't remember, but whatever it was, at one point he entered N'Djamena triumphantly, but no bullets were fired. He simply came and took over. Now there are a couple of things that affected the atmosphere. We had persuaded ourselves that he was effectively an ally of the Libyans, and therefore there were questions about what his attitude would be towards the United States. In addition, these were people that had been in the desert. They were rebels, and we literally didn't know what we were going to be dealing with. Fairly early on, the French let it be known that they could arrange for me to see him, and so I saw him - I thought it was the 3<sup>rd</sup> but it may have been the 4<sup>th</sup> of December, but it was soon after he arrived, not immediately, but soon after he arrived - and just to show how things had changed, we were fortunate in having a fellow in the AID mission who was a native Arabic speaker, Sami Zoghbi, because you couldn't get anywhere talking French. One had to speak Arabic to get through the switchboards and whatever.

*Q: Was that because of lack of language skills or because someone didn't want to be speaking French who could speak it?*

BOGOSIAN: These people didn't speak French. They were from Sudan. Now I can tell you an

anecdote that occurred a year or so later when I was crossing in front of the Presidential Palace and this man aimed his gun at me, and he had no notion of what the American flag was flying on the car or anything, and I suspected he couldn't speak French - these people were referred to as Sudanese by the Chadians because the Zaghawa tribe straddles Sudan and Chad - and I said to him in Arabic, "I'm the American ambassador." And he said in English, "Oh, alright then, go ahead."

Q: *That's wonderful.*

BOGOSIAN: Many Chadians speak Arabic. It's essentially a second language, along with French. But there was a soccer match shortly after Deby took over between Sudan and Chad, and the word was there were more people standing up for the Sudan national anthem than the Chadians'. And indeed, to this day, I'm sure there are many Chadians who resent the Zaghawa as essentially foreigners.

In any event, Sami Zoghbi helped set up a meeting for me with Deby, and my recollection is that it was at their military headquarters, and the only thing I can say is that the atmosphere was electric, everything from boy soldiers to military vehicles covered with dust - this kind of Arabic quality to it all.

BOGOSIAN: So we entered. The Libyan ambassador, who was there at the time also trying to have a meeting, looked at me - after all, we had no contact with the Libyans, and their protégé, or so we thought, had arrived - and he didn't know what to say, and he says in French, "*Mes respects, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur.*" My respects, Mr. Ambassador. Anyway, so I had my first meeting with Deby, and it turned out he was slightly built, as many of those people are, wiry - which is to say I was much bigger than he. He had sneakers on and military clothes. He had two other people with him.

There was a kind of "what do we do now?" atmosphere. So we exchanged greetings, and it was clear that he wanted to be civil and signal to us that he was prepared to work with the Americans. And I basically asked him two or three questions. I said, "My top priority is the safety of the American community, and I want to know whether I have your support." And he said, "Yes." And I said, "My second question is do you affirm Chad's international commitments?" He said yes. Now the last few days we've learned that Chad has sent troops to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and he claims that under their mutual assistance pact, which Habre and Mobutu negotiated, they still have to come to DROC's [Democratic Republic of Congo) aid, even though times have changed. So you can blame me for getting them to assume Chad's-

Q: *He sent troops to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.*

BOGOSIAN: Yes, now in 1998.

Q: *And what does that have to do with Mobutu?*

BOGOSIAN: Because under the Mobutu régime, Mobutu and Habre were very close, and they signed a mutual defense treaty - and, indeed, Zaire had sent troops to help Chad when they were

fighting Libya.

Q: *Right.*

BOGOSIAN: So now, their successors, Deby and Kabila, each of whom respectively despise Habre and Mobutu, are citing the mutual defense treaty.

*Dick, you were meeting for the first time with Deby, and we were getting to the third question that you asked him.*

BOGOSIAN: Now I think it was the third. Whether there was a fourth or not, I don't know, but there was another matter that was of great, great importance and urgency to us, and this also requires a little background.

I mentioned that in the Reagan era, in the 1980s, there was this major effort to thwart Libya and that Chad was one of the places where that effort was made and was thought to be successful. Somehow, and I'm not able to get into too many details, but there was in Chad at that time a group of Libyans who opposed Qadhafi, and they were, if you will, a military unit. I think they were called the Libyan Salvation Army or something like that. They were supported by a number of countries, including Iraq under Saddam Hussein. I never actually met any of those people. I frankly chose not to meet any of them, but they were there.

Once it was clear that Habre was leaving, our fear was that if Deby, in fact, was pursuing a Libyan agenda, as we thought he might, then he may attempt to move against this group, and in turn, if they feared that was what would happen and they had enough military hardware, it could be very bloody. So the question was what do we do? And among the things that I had to take up with Deby was that issue. And in effect, the first thing was to get out in the open that they were there, that we felt we could be helpful in getting them out of Chad, but that would mean he needed to give us the time to do it, and that we felt it was very important to avoid a bloodbath in the capital, and we feared that if Deby's forces moved, that the other group would fight, because they had nowhere to go. So I raised that with him, and his answer, in so many words, was, "We agree. There should not be a bloodbath, and we want to avoid a bloodbath, and therefore go ahead and find a way to take care of this problem."

So then the question was how to do it. And I worked with my staff, including the military attaché, and with the French. Deby said they had to be disarmed, so the question was to disarm them, and how do you do that and also have security? And in effect what happened was we agreed to get them out of there. The French agreed to provide what amounted to perimeter security. And our defense attaché, either foolishly or courageously, depending on how you think, one by one disarmed this whole group.

Q: *Amazing.*

BOGOSIAN: It is amazing. He was a very experienced attaché. He had served in many countries. He spoke French. And he just simply did it.

*Q: Were he based only in Chad?*

BOGOSIAN: Yes, that was his... I mean, he had been elsewhere, but that-

*Q: He sounds like a hotshot.*

BOGOSIAN: No, he was a very cool... He wasn't a hotshot.

*Q: I meant that in a good way.*

BOGOSIAN: He was an effective person on that particular matter. In fact, I will tell you - this isn't him so much, but the evening that Habre and his people were leaving, some of Habre's soldiers went to the defense attaché's house with a view of looting it, and the Chadian guard pulled out a knife and said, "You can kill me, but I'll take at least one of you down with me." And they went away. That was the kind of atmosphere that was going on that night. And the thing you need to know is throughout all this we were in constant contact with Washington, and in fact, this exercise, to get rid of these people, the climax of it came a week after Deby took over. So Friday, December 1, I was up all night, and Friday, December 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> or whatever it was.

So there are a couple of questions. One was logistic, and somehow or other the U.S. government managed to get some C-141s. Now the thing is, what you need to know is, because it was at the airport, this was all in the public eye, and it was reported in the press. The Libyan ambassador was watching the whole thing. And Jeff Davidow, our principal deputy assistant secretary, and Hank Cohen, the assistant secretary, were sort of at the other end of the phone line; and the first evening they said that Nigeria would accept a planeload of these people. So we sent them to Nigeria. Davidow called me. He said, "I want you to know that the Nigerians won't take any more of these people. Don't worry, we'll work out something." And 24 hours later, or whatever it was, he said, "All right, they're going to go to Zaire. Mobutu has agreed to take them." But then the idea was, by then the tension had reached such levels that we were told they just all had to get out. Now I chose not to be at the airport, but I gather that two planeloadfuls were put on one plane. They either stood up or I don't know what they did, but there were heroic efforts to get them out of there.

One of the things that happened was that, strictly speaking, prisoners of war, and the one sort of group that had wanted contact with them was the Red Cross. We had worked out an arrangement whereby the idea was that the Red Cross would interview them once they got out of town, that it was too dangerous to do that in N'Djamena - it would slow the process down. I thought we had this all worked out with the International Committee for the Red Cross in Geneva and with the French and everyone else, but at the eleventh hour the Red Cross representative said this violated every rule of the Red Cross, and in a word, we simply did it. To be honest with you, I was not that knowledgeable of the rules, and I just felt we had to get them out. We really were worried what would -

*Q: What was the Red Cross's concern?*

BOGOSIAN: Well, they felt - and I gather this is the case - that you don't just pick up a prisoner of war and move him. At a minimum, they should have a right to interview him and make sure that that person was willing to go and that they weren't just being dragooned. You could argue that in fact that's what we did. Now I will say, that once they were in Zaire, they were all interviewed, and in fact, some of them ultimately went back to Libya. They actually ended up in Kenya for a while as well. The thing that drove us was our conclusion, which Deby shared, that if this thing was not handled correctly and very quickly, there would be major fighting in N'Djamena, with untold consequences. So that's what drove us, and that's what Washington agreed we should do.

Now by then this is the end of the first week of December, and by then it was clear that the Deby régime was willing to work with us. There were a couple of other things that were happening that affected the overall atmosphere. Our defense attaché told us, or he said, as the change took place from Habre to Deby, he said there'll be an initial feeling of euphoria as the tyrannical Habre régime ends and the new régime begins. He said, what you'll find is that after a couple of weeks there will be a lot of score-settling done and various other problems will emerge. And in word, he was right, and by Christmas there was shooting all the time. And in fact, at some times over the next two years or so, it became very tense, and a couple of times we thought there was going to be a civil war in N'Djamena. And so whereas there was this euphoria after the collapse of Habre, at one point there was, for one reason or another by one group or another - not necessarily Habre loyalists - problems - let's put it that way - and throughout our assignment in Chad, there was fighting, or I should say shooting, very often. It was very unstable and at times very dangerous, and particularly around that Christmas. On the other hand, one of the things Deby did soon after arriving was to promise a more democratic country and more freedom. And once again, in a word, he fulfilled that promise - not perfectly and not immediately, but one of the *Leitmotifs* of Deby's period was to, at times reluctantly, put into place a new form of government so that now there's a parliament, there have been elections. I'm sure they don't satisfy people who are looking for true democracy, and I'm sure that Deby in some ways is still a *de facto* dictator, but the fact is, it is no longer the kind of totalitarian régime that existed under Habre. Frankly, it's a much more ineffective régime. Deby doesn't have the personal skills that Habre had. He doesn't have the education Habre did. Habre had advanced degrees.

Q: *He stayed in, Dick?*

BOGOSIAN: He's still in power. But he did open it up, and one thing that happened was there was much more of a free press, and what this meant was it all of a sudden meant that one needed to know what was in the newspapers, one needed to know what was on the radio and the TV, because whereas before it was just the government line, now you had independent voices. There were cartoons in the paper that were scurrilous making fun or criticizing Deby.

There were a couple of things that happened as a result. What I found was, in those first days, if I called on Deby or some other important official, the television cameras were there because they wanted to have it known that the American ambassador was calling on these leaders. So after a while I thought I'd better wear a blue shirt, and what I found was that they weren't always there any more so it didn't make any difference whether I wore a blue shirt or a white shirt. One time I had met the vice president in what, in fact, was an important meeting, and as I left, the television

journalists were there, and they asked for a statement. I said that we spoke about bilateral relations and international affairs - which would have been satisfactory under Habre. They said, "You're going to have to do better than that, Mr. Ambassador." But what happened was that -

*Q: They had picked up some experience.*

BOGOSIAN: What that meant was - and for me this was new, this didn't exist in Sudan or Niger or until then in Chad - we could think about what public role I should play. Now my philosophy was that because of my size and appearance and because I represented such a big powerful country, I did not want to be in the newspapers or have an aggressive public policy, but what happened in Chad was there were times when what I said made a difference. There was one time in that early period, and I forget exactly when, when the situation was very tense, and my staff came to me and said, "You need to say something." And we talked about it, and I said, "Alright." And the DCM, Barbara Schell, proceeded to write some remarks, and the public affairs officer arranged a press conference, and I made a statement urging people to stay calm and urging the government to continue its commitment to democracy and - whatever I said. And the next day, the president called me and thanked me, and his opposition called me and thanked me - and that was something new in my experience, and for the first time, I had some sense of what public diplomacy could be. And again, I had a staff that everything from identifying an opportunity to helping to prepare the actual words to pulling the thing together, and as an ambassador, it was a very satisfying experience, both in terms of a smooth-running effective operation and to think that one could make a statement and have that effect. So those were exciting times to be in Chad.

I mentioned that this was our favorite assignment, and one reason was that the Chadians, as people, were very warm and very interesting. They had opinions, quite different from the Nigerians, who were quite reserved. The Chadian women were interesting people. Many of them had had to play a public role during the civil war. Many of them lost husbands, brothers, sons, and they had to play a role; and for my wife, in particular, this made Chad a very interesting place to work. She would give these coffees and invite people like the deputy mayor and the minister of this who was female. And my deputy was Barbara Schell, and we asked her if she'd like to go to the coffee my wife was giving for these Chadian women. She said, "Well, if you're inviting me as the deputy chief of mission, I'll go, but if you're inviting me as a woman, no." So we had to deal with that as well.

One of the things that happened that December was that the vice president, who was of the Hadjerai ethnic group - and in Chadian politics that's always a group that doesn't fit in right, and so he had an important position, but he also wanted to show that he was an important person - and so he had the American ambassador come, but in fact he raised an issue that was important. This was in December of 1990. The new government wanted to send a delegation to Washington, and would we accept them? And so I recommend that they agree to that, and Washington did agree to it, and so I went to Washington in January of 1991 to be there for that particular matter. There were two or three things that happened during that time that make it memorable.

One evening I had dinner with friends, and when I got back to the hotel, my son called, and he said, "Dad, the war has begun." And what he meant was Desert Storm. Like many American, I

turned the TV on and watched the war live from Baghdad, and you recall that our first assignment was in Baghdad and we had also served in Kuwait, so that had a lot of resonance with us too. Secondly, on that evening, the DCM felt she should stay on the compound, but because we had so many people staying at the residence, my wife said, "Well, you can stay, but you're going to have to sleep in my husband's bed." And the DCM said all right. Now earlier on, I had asked my first DCM in Niger, Al Fairchild, I said, "You know, I never took the DCM's course. What do they teach you?" He said, one thing they teach you is not to play with the Ambassador's toys when he's away, like his men's room or his soap. Barbara Schell said, given that, "What do you think they'd say if you said the DCM slept in the Ambassador's bed while he was away?"

But the third thing that happened that week was a story that was kind of interesting. One of the things we did for Chad when Habre was in power was to provide Stinger missiles. And when I got to Chad, the defense attaché said to me one day, "I have to go to Bardai," which is in the far north of Chad, near Libya. He said, "You know, we've provided Stinger missiles to them, and we have an obligation to actually check every once in a while and make sure that they're there." So when this trouble began, along with everything else, one of the questions was where are those Stinger missiles? So when I got to Washington, the under secretary for security assistance, Reg Bartholomew, told me that it was crucially important to get these missiles now. I guess I'd known that before the trip, but I had a meeting with him where he explained that recently some had been lost somewhere else, and there was this general feeling that those missiles actually had the ability to knock down American aircraft, so it was highly dangerous to have them in the wrong hands. And apparently we had not agreed to provide those Stinger missiles to some of our closest allies, and I'm told that when Secretary Baker heard that there were Stinger missiles in Chad, he said, "What the hell did we give Stinger missiles to Chad for?" And that gives you some idea of the notion that Habre had in those days, that we were willing to provide Stinger missiles for him.

*Q: He got them from us.*

BOGOSIAN: He did. Not only that, he bought them; he owned them.

*Q: He got them from us, and not through some international black market.*

BOGOSIAN: That's right. So one of my tasks, when Deby took over, was to assure the safety of the American community and to assure that our relationship was one that could continue. One of the tasks was to get the Libyans out of there, and one of the tasks was to get these Stinger missiles. So I went back to tell the vice president, after I returned, that it was absolutely essential to get those Stingers. I don't remember how many there were - 10, 12, whatever it was. And he was a little nervous. He said, well, why are you picking on us? And I was able to tell him that we had refused to provide them to I don't know how many countries and that we would buy them back, which would have been \$2 million. And they needed money more than they needed the missiles. He says, all right, we'll get them to you. And in fact, somehow the French got a hold of them and got them out of Chad, and so it was one more problem taken care of.

What that meant was that by the end of January, the kind of problems that immediately rose to

the surface - the Libyans, the safety issue, and so forth - had essentially been taken care of, and the more positive thing was that Deby had committed himself to much more palatable civil rights and democracy program. The negatives were that he represented a tiny minority in the country. It was almost certain that those soldiers would not be any less cruel than Habre's, although I don't think he ever put people in jail, at least not while I was there, the way Habre did. And we had lost a special friend, and the simple fact was Deby was not Habre, nor did Deby do what Habre did. Deby did what Habre did when he was with Habre. He was one of the fighters. But, you know, things change. Budgets aren't the same; attitudes aren't the same. And so the U.S. was simply not prepared to have the kind of relationship with Deby that we had had with Habre.

There was another factor, though, and that was that by 1991 it became increasingly evident that Exxon had found a significant amount of oil. The thought was that there were about a billion barrels of oil reserves in Chad. The oil situation led to what I called "the four billions." There was a billion oil barrels (reserves) in Chad. This level of reserves would permit a production that would bring to Chad about a billion dollars a year in income, which was vastly more than they had. It would require an investment of a billion dollars by the consortium, and it would cost another billion to build a pipeline to Douala or the Douala area of Cameroon. In terms of private investment in Africa, this was going to be one of the biggest, and certainly one of the biggest American investments in Africa. It also meant that the oil situation was going to transform Chad, if in fact they ever did begin to produce. Now there were three reasons why the *if*-clause was significant. First of all, because of the inherent instability of Chad, you never quite knew whether the political situation would be calm enough for the companies to choose to move forward. Secondly, one never quite knew whether the oil companies, even under stable conditions, would make the investment. And the third thing was whether the pipeline project could move forward. Now I would note that these issues are all still there, but what seems to be the case is that the oil companies have made a commitment.

Q: *Is there oil there?*

BOGOSIAN: Oh, yes.

Q: *In large amount?.*

BOGOSIAN: Well, a billion barrels.

Q: *Is any of it coming out?*

BOGOSIAN: Not yet. I mean, they've got oil out of the ground, but it's not in production yet. There's no pipeline.

Q: *There's no bonanza yet.*

BOGOSIAN: There's no pipeline, yes, partly because of the financing, which involved the World Bank, and of course, there are environmental issues. It's going to go through primeval forest and all kinds of things. But the policy decision, both in Chad and in Cameroon, and also by the companies, is to do it. Now, what I will say is - a couple of little footnotes - is the



consortium when I got there was Exxon, Chevron, and Shell - two-thirds American and one-third Dutch-British. Chevron chose to leave; they wanted to put all their eggs in Kazakhstan. And finally, at that point, the French wanted in, and so ELF now is the third partner, the French oil company. And that's fine with us. I mean, Exxon and ELF are together in Niger as well. If the pipeline is built, then it's very likely to permit Nigerian oil also to be exploited and come through Chad.

Two other things to note. While I was there, Sunoco also looked for oil in northern Chad. I think there's oil there, but they said it wasn't worth pursuing now. I understand that there still may be companies looking in northern Chad, just as there are in northern Niger. So there was some exploration while I was there, but nothing happened. There is oil immediately to the north of Lake Chad. Now the oil Exxon is working with is in the southern part of Chad, and it's waxy, they say it's waxy.

*Q: That means it's not good?*

BOGOSIAN: Well, it's not the best. The oil north of Lake Chad is so fine that it almost needs no refining. It looks like honey. It's light and amber in color. The amount of it isn't that much to attract everybody, but the point is simply that there is oil there, and there are implications of this. One of the things I did over the three years I was there, particularly after Deby came in and particularly after Chad and Libya were taking their case to the International Court of Justice, was to say the Libya angle is not of prime importance any more to the United States. The most important thing is oil. This is an American company making the investment, and what it does is, on the one hand, raise issues that we have to deal with and, on the other hand, potentially transform Chad. And after about two years, Washington agreed. When we had the policy meeting in Washington that kind of endorsed that policy, where we defined oil as our principal interest in Chad, the military representative at the meeting said, "Well, that's fine with us if oil is the most important thing in our relationship. We're not going to argue that. But don't expect the U.S. military to go to Chad to save the oil fields. And we all said, yes, we understand that. And it was around that time that the French started saying they wanted to get in and replace Chevron. And the French ambassador - this was a different French ambassador - said to me, "You know that if it came to that, we [meaning the French military] would come in to save the oil fields." So that's another angle. I think one of the things about the French in Chad is Chad has an emotional connection to France that, at least for the last 50 years, has rested on the fact that General LeClerc left from Chad to go back and retake North Africa for the Free French. And they tell me that that has resonance in France. It's one of the things that link them.

Now I said the thing that transformed the assignment in Chad was what happened in December of 1990. What that meant was that over the remainder of my assignment in Chad there were certain, sort of, themes. One was safety. The country was very unstable. I mentioned that there was shooting off and on in Chad. On October 13, 1991 (I think that was the date), there was shooting in Chad and two of our residences took missile hits. Nobody got hurt. In one case the family was away.

*Q: What kind of missiles?*

BOGOSIAN: Probably Frog. I don't know. We evacuated a second time. There was a third time when Washington wanted us to evacuate, but we chose not to. So the whole remainder of the time we were there, it isn't so much that you couldn't function, but it was a very tense environment. At times, that took an emotional toll on the people who were there. Interestingly, the people who were most upset were the ones who did leave. It's quite an emotional strain to leave, especially if, say, your husband or someone else is left behind. Another thing that happened was this effort to keep them honest in terms of a free press, no human rights violations - things like that - moving towards a more democratic system. And indeed, over the period we were there, for example, they permitted political parties, and so there was a lot of political activity in that regard. And many of them would come to us and ask us to help them one way or the other, so that it was a very exciting and positive -

Q: *Were we able to help nurture democracy there?*

BOGOSIAN: Yes, mind you, a lot of it was what you might call moral - what's the phrase?

Q: *"Suasion" or "leadership"?*

BOGOSIAN: Moral support. I mean, they had this perception that if the Americans, for example, kept the pressure on Deby, that made a difference, as distinct from providing a lot of money to political parties. On the other hand, one of the things that happened while we were there, during our third year, was what they called a national conference. I don't know that we've had anything quite like that in the United States, but it was becoming kind of common in Francophone Africa. There was one in Zaire; there was one in Congo-Brazzaville; there was one in Benin, I believe. What happened was, you got a broad cross-section of people who come together for a week or a month or whatever it is and basically sort out all the issues of the day. That's particularly important in a country like Chad, which had been through a civil war where there were 200 tribes or 200 language groups, where there were a lot of mutual suspicions. So to get together and have an honest discussion was very important. And the French, I think they paid something like a million dollars for security, and we paid \$75,000, if I remember correctly, so that the proceedings could be broadcast live to the nation. And while that happened, everywhere people had their radios on. We were traveling in the countryside, and even if we had an official meeting, the official would have a radio on his coffee table. And so in that way, we were able to convey to the nation in a whole what was going on in N'Djamena. We had numerous, numerous meetings with people on the politics and trying to keep the people who were looking for a more liberal system not to lose faith, to keep the pressure on Deby. And at times he got angry with me, and at times he, as I said, would call and thank us.

Q: *Dick, let me ask you, with regard to Washington, you were real far away. You were ambassador in Chad. Did you feel that anyone was listening? Did you feel that people there knew what was going on and getting support and wisdom and leadership?*

BOGOSIAN: I felt that they listened to the degree they had to. When we had our major crisis, when Habre was overthrown and everything, Jeff Davidow, our principal deputy assistant secretary, and Hank Cohen were there. There was one point when there was a very delicately balanced situation, and it happened that Cohen came to town and he was able to do some very

good work, and that got us over that particular problem. But they weren't intrusive, and they didn't get in my way. Bob Pringle was the country director for Central African affairs, and most of what I had to get into he was able to deal with in a way that took care of what I needed. In those days we were able to maintain our AID program. Shortly after I left, AID in it's wisdom decided to end the program. Why were we able to do it while I was there? I don't know. I don't know whether somehow we just had enough momentum behind us and we had some good people, but after I left... But I don't know. In the case of AID, it went bad after I left. In the case of the defense attaché, it was bad before I got there.

We had a good team. We had some things happen that could have been disastrous. We had a storm one night, May 14, I think, 1993, it would have been - almost like a tornado. And there were two people in the AID mission, one was the wife of the defense attaché, who was working for AID, and the other was another AID employee, who were working late. They were going to stay a little later, and they said, well, let's go home. And the roof fell in. They would have been killed.

**FRANKLIN E. HUFFMAN**  
**Public Affairs Officer**  
**N'Djamena (1999-2000)**

*Franklin E. Huffman was born in Harrisonburg, Virginia in 1934. In 1955 he graduated from Bridgewater College and immediately joined IVS. From 1967 to 1985 he was a Professor of Southeast Asian languages and linguistics at Yale and Cornell. His second career was as a Foreign Service Officer with USIA where he was posted to London, Rangoon, Marrakech, Paris, Washington, Phnom Penh, and Wellington, with subsequent WAE tours to N'Djamena (Chad) and Phnom Penh. Mr. Huffman was interviewed in January 2006 by Charles Stuart Kennedy*

HUFFMAN: So I agreed to go to Chad because I had never been to Sub-Saharan Africa. Of course I'd been to Morocco but I had never been to Sub-Saharan Africa and even though I was too senior for the job (I had been promoted to OC in 1996 in Cambodia), I just thought it would be an interesting experience. But this was right about the time the two agencies were consolidating and I had had an unpleasant experience with that in New Zealand, but I thought well, you know, I want to see Sub-Saharan Africa, it will be interesting and I will do whatever they tell me.

Well, I found out that didn't work. You still have to feel that you are doing something useful. Chad is the poorest country I've ever seen in my life but it was still interesting and exotic. The problem was not Chad; my problems were with my own embassy. I was no longer the head of an agency at post. I was under the thumb of various layers of bureaucracy that I wasn't accustomed to and my staff was all unhappy and saying well, the previous PAO promised this and that and fought for us, but of course she had left the problems for me to resolve. It was quite traumatic, actually - before the consolidation, as the head of agency I had had my own budget, I had had my own cars and drivers and my own computer specialists and so on, and here suddenly my status had been revised downward and my autonomy shackled. There was this young brash

admin officer who took great pleasure, I think, in telling me at one point that I no longer had “procurement authority,” which is bureaucratese for “you can’t buy anything.” I couldn’t go out and buy a pencil. He had to do it for me; I had to put in a requisition for it, which he might or might not approve.

*Q: Who was the ambassador?*

HUFFMAN: Christopher Goldthwait. He was the first member of the Foreign Agricultural Service to ever be named an ambassador. He was way over qualified to be ambassador to Chad because he was a career minister. He had been in charge of all trade with Russia in the Department of Agriculture. But anyway, he was a nice gentleman and his hobby was archaeology, which is perfect because Chad is rich in archaeological remains. At the same time he was writing a novel about archeological exploration that was set in Chad.

*Q: In retrospect, do you feel that the tour in Chad was worthwhile, in spite of all the problems you had?*

Huffman: Oh, yes; no question about it. It enabled me to understand the problems of Africa in a way that I could never have done had I not spent a year there. Chad has all of the problems common to most of the countries of sub-Saharan Africa – the tension between the nomadic Arab Muslim herdsman of the north and the black African Christian farmers of the south. The history of Chad, like other countries in the region, is the competition for power between the two factions, with the southern Christians, who were typically supported by the former French colonists, in general losing out to the northern Arabs, as desertification and the nomadic life encroaches on the south. But the more serious problem is that most of the leaders are more concerned with lining their own pockets and those of their immediate tribe than with the welfare of the country as a whole, which in any case is usually an unnatural construct carved out by the Europeans. President Idriss Deby is no exception – he stormed out of Sudan and overthrew the French-supported President Habre, and is using the revenues from the country’s recently-exploited oil resources to maintain himself and his Zaghawa tribe in power rather than to relieve the desperate poverty of his people.

**CHRISTOPHER E. GOLDTHWAIT**  
**Ambassador**  
**Chad (1999-2004)**

*Ambassador Goldthwait was born in Georgia and raised in Illinois, New York and California. He was educated at American and Harvard Universities. Joining the Food and Agriculture Service (FAS) in the Department of Agriculture in 1973, the Ambassador served in several high level positions of the FAS in Washington, D.C. as well as in Germany and Nigeria. In 1999 he was appointed U.S. Ambassador to Chad, where he served until he retired in 2004. Ambassador Goldthwait was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2007.*

*Q: OK, well let's come to you going to Chad. Here you are a member of the Foreign Agricultural Service. In the first place were you the only ambassador ever named out of this or had there been others?*

GOLDTHWAIT: I was the first. I like to say that even middle-aged males can break glass ceilings but since then there have been two others. I don't believe, well the third one I think is just back, Suzanne Hale. The other was Mattie Sharpless. Mattie went to Central African Republic about a year after I went to Chad and Suzanne went to somewhere in the South Pacific a couple years later. I don't believe there is currently any FAS ambassador. There may be someone under consideration, I don't know.

*Q: How did this appointment come about?*

GOLDTHWAIT: Well a number of people in the other foreign affairs agencies from which ambassadors had not traditionally come, including USDA, were thinking that it might be good for their own parts of the Foreign Service and I know that as early as probably 1995 my Under Secretary started writing letters to the Director General suggesting that someone be selected from the Foreign Agricultural Service. Initially there wasn't really much response and even at that point I think I was the person who the Under Secretary had in mind to suggest. But a couple years later we actually started getting requests from the State Department to send a nomination or to send a name for the D committee to consider. In 1998 the first individual from the Foreign Commercial Service was taken as ambassador. He went out to Ivory Coast, as I recall.

*Q: Where was it?*

GOLDTHWAIT: Ivory Coast.

*Q: Ivory Coast.*

GOLDTHWAIT: The next year after my name had gone over about three times I was selected for Chad.

*Q: OK, you were in Chad from when to when?*

GOLDTHWAIT: I got there in about October of 1999 and I came back in January of 2004.

*Q: That's a long, long time particularly going through a change in administration. I guess it also shows the priority Chad had on the sort of political horizon.*

GOLDTHWAIT: Well there was a joke after the election about hanging chad. Karen Harris, the State Secretary in Florida, was shown answering a phone call and a voice on the other side said, "Congratulations your ambassadorship has come through. That's the good news, the bad is its Chad."

*Q: The joke being that in the Florida county the ballots in 2000 chads were a sort of a paper flap that came down and is this a vote or not a vote. It became quite an important issue. Did you run*

*into any problem with confirmation?*

GOLDTHWAIT: No, none at all. We went up several of us as a panel and the person who was sort of the star of our panel, if you will, was Ambassador Johnny Carson who was heading out to Kenya. That country had a good bit more visibility than any of our other countries. We each got a couple questions but the real focus was on Kenya more than it was on the other countries.

*Q: How well were you briefed and prepared sort of reading into Chad before you went there?*

GOLDTHWAIT: The desk put together a briefing book for me. It was very good, very useful so I was able to read in, I was able to go over and read some of the recent cable traffic and things like that. So I had a pretty good idea of what the situation was. I had had a lot of experience testifying before Congress as a General Sales Manager so I wasn't really too worried about the confirmation hearing.

*Q: What were American interests in Chad would you say when you went out there?*

GOLDTHWAIT: When I went out the main thing that was front and center was the development of the oil project in southern Chad. The issue of the day was whether the World Bank would, in fact, make its loan to the Chadian government to pay for its share of the construction pipeline that would go from southern Chad to the Cameroonian coast. This was about a \$500 million loan but it was critical to the project for a number of reasons. First of all it would give the Chadians some ownership and some additional revenue as fees for the use of the pipeline. But more importantly Exxon Mobile the lead company, felt that they needed the involvement of the World Bank as a kind of an extra security measure, if you will, to be sure that the Chadian government would uphold its end of the deal and to just add general visibility and assurance to the project.

*Q: The Cold War was well over by this time. Were there any security concerns about Chad?*

GOLDTHWAIT: Well there were general concerns. At that time, obviously in contrast to today, Chad was a kind of an island of stability in the region. There was Qadhafi to the north, the Sudanese with their still on-going civil war to the east...

*Q: This is the North-South War?*

GOLDTHWAIT: Yes, not Darfur which came later and began about a year before I left Chad. There was a coup in the Central African Republic just a couple of years after I got to Chad and so it was less stable. There were various communal problems in Nigeria as well as the sporadic violence in the oil-producing region of the Niger delta, which has if anything has gotten worse. So Chad for the moment was quiet so there was a good bit of concern about stability in the region but not specific to Chad, less specific to Chad.

*Q: Was there sort of an informal acceptance of the fact that Chad was within the purview of the French military protection and influence and all of that or not?*

GOLDTHWAIT: There was in fact and it put not only myself but I think it put every American

ambassador who goes into Chad or Niger or one of these other countries in a little bit of an awkward situation. We don't tend to give a lot of foreign assistance to these countries. In fact the AID mission in Chad had closed just as my predecessor was arriving and that made for a very, very rough tour for him. But people in the country would still look to the United States to be rather front and center but we didn't have the resources in country that the French had and we were always a little bit out of the lime light.

*Q: Before you went out were you talking to American oil people or business people? I mean were these contacts you were making?*

GOLDTHWAIT: I talked to some of the Exxon Mobile people here in Washington before going out and I very quickly made the acquaintance of the director of the project when I got to N'Djamena. The project was not yet really under construction. Everybody was set to begin it, people were assuming that the World Bank loan would in fact come through, which it did about three months or so after I got to country...

*Q: And was agriculture important in Chad?*

Yes, there was a very important agriculture element. It's the one country in the Sahel belt that is more or less food self-sufficient. We do in fact provide a very small amount of food aid to Chad on an on-going basis but it is pretty much self-sufficient. Now we provide more food aid aimed at Darfur refugees but agriculture and herding, livestock, employ perhaps 70 percent, 80 percent of the population and the southern part of the country is actually fairly productive and has about the same amount of rainfall as Washington, DC.

*Q: I thought in some ways herding is almost counter productive looking at practically the people...this is wealth so you don't use your cattle you might say as a food or milk element but more as a prestige element and it also eats up grain. How did this...?*

GOLDTHWAIT: The herding is almost entirely nomadic and it's all pasture. They are not grain fed by any means. But you are correct, there is reluctance on the part of many of the nomads to slaughter their livestock. The pattern is for them to sell a few animals a year just so that they would have a little bit of cash income because otherwise they would have none. So they might sell three or four head of cattle or a camel or two if there are cattle and camels. The main food animals are sheep and goats and so there is more trade and slaughter of sheep and goats.

*Q: What were you hearing about the ruler the president for life or what is his title?*

GOLDTHWAIT: I think today you can say that he is president for life. This is one of the things that made the situation in country a bit more stable when I was there. He was just about to run for his second term, that election took place actually while I was still there probably about mid-way through my tour. So there was the illusion and people took it a little bit more strongly, that maybe there would be some progress in a democratic direction. However, about two years after I left, i.e., two years ago, the president had the constitution amended so that he could run for a third term which was not permitted under the constitution as it was written when I arrived in the country. That alienated even people within his own power base, which is why the problems were

in Chad last week and in fact one of the rebel factions, and there are two or three different factions fighting the government now, one of them is lead by fellow members of the same ethnic group as the president who are actually a pair of brothers. One of them headed the cotton monopoly while I was in country and the other was the government's person in the negotiations on the oil project with Exxon Mobile so I know those folks. They are very sophisticated gentlemen and they are now up in arms.

*Q: In the first place the president's name is?*

GOLDTHWAIT: Idriss Deby.

*Q: D-E...?*

GOLDTHWAIT: B-Y.

*Q: B-Y. What were you getting as you were going out there about him as a personality and his method of ruling?*

GOLDTHWAIT: There were kind of two schools of thought and I encountered this among my colleagues in the embassy when I got there. Some wanted to be give him the benefit of the doubt and watch and try to encourage him to move in a more democratic direction. There were others who tended to be with the so-called democratic opposition in country who were dead set against him and with whom he had no credibility even then. This gets to one of the interesting factors in Chad, which is the way in which the country is divided north, and south in terms of many, many things. There is a religious divide between the Muslim north and the Christian south; the country is about 55 percent Muslim and about 40 percent Christian. There is an educational divide; the French educated the southerners and the educational system is much stronger in the south than in the north. There is an ethnic divide; the northerners tend to be from a different language family and other different ethnicities. They almost don't consider themselves black sometimes. They consider themselves as having great affinities with the Arabic world. The southerners tend to be darker and they tend to be from the various Bantu tribal groups; so you would have these ethnic divides. You have going back historically a divide between slave traders from the north and immigrants from the south. So you would have all of these and, of course, you would have a geographical divide; the southerners are farmers and the northerners are pastoralists. So you have all of these divides that sort of cut across the middle of the country and N'Djamena is kind of where they all come together. In fact you have this series of divisions across most of the Sahelian countries.

*Q: Well you got out there and you said it was...?*

GOLDTHWAIT: In October of '99.

*Q: In October. In the first place, what sort of an embassy did you have?*

GOLDTHWAIT: It was certainly on the small side. We had a large number of Chadian employees because we employed all of our guards, drivers and grounds men and people like that



directly rather than through contractors. But we had what when I got there? We had about twenty-two or twenty-three Americans including our Marine detachment. That had actually grown to about thirty-three or thirty-four by the time I left four years later.

*Q: Who was your DCM and how was he or she chosen?*

GOLDTHWAIT: The DCM when I arrived was Paul Rowe who I believe is still in the service. He had been selected and or short-listed, shall we say, by the department and was suggested to me. I met with him and he went out to post about a month before I did or maybe two months. I was able to meet with him a couple of times here before he left and satisfied myself that we would work well together and that was the process.

*Q: Did you go out with the family?*

GOLDTHWAIT: No, I'm single so I went out by myself and that's both easier and harder in a country like Chad. Easier in a sense that you are not concerned about the family all the time but harder in the sense that obviously you don't have the on the spot support, particularly in entertaining and things like that, but that's...

*Q: With entertaining quite often when the ambassador is single male or female, sort of the DCMs wife will fill in or a political officer depending on the agenda or something. Did you usually do this?*

GOLDTHWAIT: Not really. I have always done a lot of entertaining myself just personally and then also business entertaining. I had an excellent staff in the house, the staff was four people, the house was immediately next to the embassy in the same compound so if I needed to run over and make sure things were in hand for a lunch or a dinner or a reception. But the first thing I did when I got off the plane was interviewing a cook. He was waiting at the house when I got there and he turned out to be an excellent cook. The major domo in the house who had been there for years and years and years and I could simply say tonight, or not tonight I would give him a few days warning, but Thursday night we will have a reception for 40 people. The cook would bring me a list of what he proposed to serve and I would say, "Fine" and he would shop. He would have a couple of other people come in to help with the service and I would virtually have to do nothing.

*Q: All right let's talk about...OK you arrive and was the presentation of credentials a ceremony or was it pro forma? How did you find it?*

GOLDTHWAIT: It was a ceremony. We pushed the Chadians to present my credentials very quickly because there was a trip that Exxon Mobil was planning down to the oil fields and I very much wanted to be able to participate in that visit and get familiar on the spot with the biggest American interest in the country right away. It was an opportunity I didn't want to let go. The Chadians, again I think partly because of the American role in the oil project, were very cooperative and I think it was three or four days when I was able to present my credentials, the president received me. We had a brief ceremony with some photographs and things like that. He was quite cordial.

*Q: What was your initial impression of Deby?*

GOLDTHWAIT: Well he is I think very capable and very charming. He, I learned this more over time, is not a committed democrat obviously and I think he already had limits in his own mind in terms of how far he was going to allow the country to liberalize. There is another fundamental reason why democracy is very difficult in countries like Chad. It's because the government basically controls all the economic resources in the country and you don't have anybody who has the basis to build a real political party that's truly oppositional. But I think the president is a capable man. The government as a whole is less capable. One of the interesting things is that while it was very centrally run it nonetheless imposed a rather light burden on the population simply because it didn't have the resources to have a heavy presence throughout the country.

*Q: What was your impression of where the oil was being exploited and how Exxon Mobil was dealing with this?*

GOLDTHWAIT: Well the oil was in the southern part of the country maybe fifty to seventy-five miles north of the border with the CAR. There is oil in other parts of the country as well, smaller deposits that may or may not be exploited at some point. But the largest deposit, the proven reserves, is in that southern central part of the country. Exxon Mobil I thought was doing absolutely everything as impeccably as they could. They claimed and I still believe this is the case, that the project was developed with the same care for the environment and the local population that would have been the case had they been doing it in North America or Europe and you could see that they were very careful to not have any more of a footprint than they had to. So I was quite impressed by the way the project was going. Nonetheless, it was very strongly opposed by environmental groups and they had a lot of influence even with our own government and it was a very close call in that vote a couple months after I had gotten to post, as to whether or not the U.S. was actually was going to vote in favor of the World Bank loan. There was a very strong risk of that we might abstain and if we abstained and a couple of other countries abstained then a couple countries that opposed it might have carried the day.

*Q: What was the reason for the reluctance?*

GOLDTHWAIT: On this side of the Atlantic I think it was really the influence of the environmental groups and I think in Chad the opposition really came...it was more of a north-south thing. People that I described, southerners, I described a while ago, simply didn't trust government. It preferred to defer the project until that time in the distant future when a southerner might be in charge.

*Q: I don't know if the problems that Nigeria has had of the oil resources in the Delta were apparently not much money is getting to the people who live there. Was oil coming out of a populated area or what?*

GOLDTHWAIT: It was a well it was one of the more populated areas in the sense that as you go from north to south you have an increasing density of population in Chad. The southern areas are where you have a heavier rainy season, which naturally supported farming and therefore a larger

population. But it was, I don't think in the sense, by any means what you have over in Nigeria. You have a few towns but they're not the largest cities in the country. From the beginning there was an effort both by the World Bank and the Chadian government, to a degree, to avoid the mistakes of the Nigerians and to be sure there were some development projects that were aimed at the region. So you had more positive impact than has been the case in Nigeria.

*Q: Well as we have been talking today and in the last week or so there has been an attempt, I don't know that it will be successful but it doesn't look like it right now, of rebel forces to overthrow the government. There has been fighting in N'Djamena and our embassy has moved to the airport and we've taken a lot of Americans out. So there has been considerable reporting on Chad as they say. I saw one account saying that it was listed as being one of the most corrupt country and the next most corrupt was Bangladesh. Now I can't tell whether this is just media hyperbole or how was it viewed?*

GOLDTHWAIT: Well that is a list I think put together by Transparency International every year or a group like that. Certainly there is corruption in the country; there is no question about that. I've talked enough with people and have enough friends in the business community to know that there is corruption. I don't think it's as bad as some of the neighboring countries - Nigeria or Cameroon - so there may be a little bit of an issue with methodology in terms of how these things are surveyed. But no one in their right mind would deny there is corruption.

*Q: Was it sort of a given that you at the embassy and Exxon Mobil and all would try to do all they could to make sure that the money didn't go into Swiss bank accounts?*

GOLDTHWAIT: Yes, and there was a very carefully constructed revenue management plan that was put together by the World Bank, insisted on and basically what it said was a certain small percentage of the money is going to go into a fund for future generations, another small percentage is going to go to develop the oil-producing region itself, and the lion's share of the proceeds revenues would be divided among four or five key development areas and support things like health, education, agriculture and the environment and this sort of thing.

The plan had a fundamental flaw to it. Oh and a certain amount, I think about twelve percent was provided to the government to support general government expenditure so that they could increase the budget and some of the other areas a little bit. But there was sort of a fundamental flaw in how this was put together. Four or five sectors where the money was supposed to flow had been identified through the World Bank's work in preparation of a Poverty Reduction Strategy and selected that way. However, they were already the sectors into which all the other development funding coming into the country provided by the French, the Taiwanese, the European Union, the Germans, all of the other money was going into those same four sectors so you had an absorbency issue right from the get-go. The Chadians with some validity, about a year after the revenues began to flow which would have been just about the time I was leaving country, began to make noises about having the priority sectors broadened and reallocated. At a certain point they actually just took some of the revenue and used it for arms that they are using today to fight this rebellion.

So I would say that because of the revenue management plan, the scrutiny at the Bank, the IMF,

ourselves, Europeans, more of the money has gone where it was supposed to go in Chad than is the case and a number of the other oil rich African countries Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Nigeria, Sudan, but certainly not all of it and the plan has not worked perfectly. I think right now, as we speak, it's up for renegotiation as how to get through negotiations every two or three years with the World Bank. Of course, the revenues that have come in because of the huge increase in oil prices have been much larger than what was estimated so this has compounded that problem of how much you can spend in those priority sectors. [FYI – At about the time of this interview, Chad, benefiting from very high oil prices, paid off the World Bank loan and essentially walked away from the Revenue Management Plan.]

*Q: Was the president and in the first place how tribal was his government?*

GOLDTHWAIT: It was, I would say, fairly heavily tribal. His own group is not one of the larger tribal groups, it is not one of the particularly well educated tribal groups in the country but it is allied or was allied with some other northern groups so that you had pretty good representation of northerners. The ruling party actually had made an effort to become a national party and so there were southerners that were in the party and there were southerners that were represented in the government as well. It was, in effect, the only party that by any stretch you could say was a national party in the country. But the president's own tribe, the Bidayat, and a larger related tribe, the Zaghawa, dominated the military pretty strongly. So key people in the government tend to come from his immediate family circle, and his immediate tribal group.

*Q: You had an embassy, I assume political officers, economic and all. What can a political officer do in a place where it is pretty much one party?*

GOLDTHWAIT: Well first of all for a long time we only had one reporting officer when I arrived. A very good person who actually, but who had a chip on her shoulder vis-à-vis the government because one of the things she did was report a lot on what the democratic opposition was doing, and got a lot of opinionated information from there. But the cables this individual wrote were of high quality even if I had to make them a little more neutral from time to time. But for most of the time after that person left that job was vacant. We didn't get bids on it, we eventually got somebody into it that was willing to take it but came out and couldn't master French and you can't really do that work without French. So that job was combined with the consular work. So the DCM and I ended up doing most of the political reporting for about the last two years that I was there. That, of course, was a bit of the handicap and I think we were actually criticized in an Inspector General's audit that took place just after I left post for not having done more reporting.

*Q: Well what do you report?*

GOLDTHWAIT: Well first of all, we reported a lot on the oil project and how it was going. We would report on the economic development efforts in the country. About every five or six months I'd make the round of all the democratic opposition leaders of whom there were four or five and I would report on what they were saying was happening. We did reports on some of the sort of social issues in the country and these kinds of things.

*Q: Well you say democratic...*

GOLDTHWAIT: Oh, also we reported the loss particularly after the coup in the CAR...

*Q: That's the Central African Republic.*

GOLDTHWAIT: Of which the Chadians were blamed for supporting if not fostering. We reported a lot on their relations with the CAR and whether they had or had not been involved in this. Occasionally, we reported on their relations with other neighboring countries Sudan, Libya and pretty much throughout the time I was there there was a kind of festering rebellion in the far northwestern corner of the country, the Tibesti Mountains. The first year I was there it was a bit more active and there were fears that they might come down to Faya-Largeau which is sort of the main town in the northern part of the country which they never did. But there was fighting and so we'd report on that.

*Q: You mentioned your four or five democratic leaders...in the first place was this a term we used or were these say democrats or were they just people who were out of power waiting to get their hands in there?*

GOLDTHWAIT: There were leaders, which tended to be of regional political parties, and they considered themselves to be democratic. So we tended to refer to them as the democratic opposition. They were the ones that were saying we want free and fair elections, we want monitors to come in and watch the elections, etc., etc. They contested the president's reelection right after, well about a year and a half after I got there. That was an interesting election because the president won with about sixty-five percent; it was by no means an impeccable election. His party stuffed a lot of ballots but I thought it was kind of sad because I had the very strong view that if he had run a fair election he still would have been elected. So I thought it was rather unfortunate that he took the steps he needed to take or he felt that he needed to take when he really didn't need to.

*Q: Did you find yourself making representation to the president or the government on more democracy, on human rights? I mean was this an issue that we were active in?*

GOLDTHWAIT: Certainly as we got toward the presidential election and there were also parliamentary elections certainly we would go in and make representations to the effect that we wanted there to be free and fair elections. Inevitably they would told, "Of course, of course, that's what we want too." But it clearly wasn't the case.

*Q: What about on these issues what was the role of the French ambassador and his government?*

GOLDTHWAIT: That was kind of interesting, a very interesting episode. The French ambassador who was there when I arrived represented...there were two factions in the French government that tended to argue back and forth about French African policy. The presidency on the one hand and the foreign ministry. They were in the same government but they were kind of...you could see a little squabble going on. The two sides, the two factions and I don't remember which took which side at this point but one was more inclined to support the Deby

regime fairly strongly and the other was more critical of the Deby regime.

The ambassador from France when I arrived there was of the second view and he went so far as to give an interview to one of the opposition newspaper. The newspapers were the elements in Chad that were pretty free and had a pretty free press most of the time I was there but maybe less so now. But it operated except for major incidents it operated fairly freely. But I think in the interview where he sort of opined, "Well, it might not be such a bad thing after all if the rebels won. He was immediately declared persona non grata and he was out of the country in two days. A couple months later, the new ambassador arrived who took a much lower profile and a much more evenhanded view of the situation in the country. He was a true gentleman; we got along very, very well. He worked very hard to mend fences. Today there are problems in Chad; Sarkozy is supporting Deby very, very strongly.

*Q: What about relations with the French military because in a way they were kind of the people you expected to go to if there was going to be a problem weren't they?*

GOLDTHWAIT: Yes, as we did over this past weekend with the fighting in Chad. I had a military attaché at the embassy and he worked very hard not only to maintain his contacts with the Chadian military but also to be sure that he was in close consultation with the French and shared information back and forth. One of the things that we had going was the largest U.S. assistance effort when I got to Chad, was a demining effort. Going back through all the civil wars mines were used and the country is littered with mines everywhere. We were doing it actually more than the French in that area. That was sort of our little specialty.

*Q: What was your impression of the central government? Was everything going through the president or was there a competent bureaucracy with whom you were dealing?*

GOLDTHWAIT: Important questions always went through the president. The bureaucracy was not terribly, terribly competent. You had a few good people as ministers in different areas but first of all they had very few resources outside of health and education, which were big targets of the development community. The staff further down just were not that well trained and in many cases not well educated. I think it's better today because there's been a pretty intensive effort by the donor community to work on the quality for about the past ten years now.

*Q: Did you find yourself playing agricultural attaché often, going out and looking at the agricultural side of things?*

GOLDTHWAIT: Well, because most of it was subsistence farming and subsistence herding, no. But I did make a point of traveling widely around the country. Since we were not big players in the donor community we didn't have a lot of leverage with the government other than on the oil project. We weren't nearly able to get the same kind of visibility that the donor countries could achieve. I did a couple of things through which I tried to compensate for that, one of which was traveling really everywhere in the country. I think I probably traveled, I've not sat down to try to estimate it but I bet it was twenty thousand miles overland on dirt roads in the four and a half years I was there.

One of the other things we did in fact inaugurate an aid project in the oil region. I was able to get my colleagues back at USDA to use that section 416 program, something about 416 section wheat that I mentioned for a donation which we monetized, i.e., which we sold within Chad and released the money to try to snag development around the oil regions so you wouldn't have this plight from agriculture as you have had in many, many other countries. That project went rather well, in fact, the IFC came in after our funding was exhausted and we provided what six or eight million and they came in and provided another 3-4 million to keep it going after that. So that's made an impact.

*Q: Was there a problem certainly in Nigeria and other places where so many people coming sort of out of the hinterlands and heading for the capital and building shanty towns and all. Did that happen there?*

GOLDTHWAIT: To a degree. N'Djamena was home to somewhere between 800 thousand and a million people out of a population of 8 million or a little more so you have had that. They've had growth in two or three other towns like Moundou and Kelo as well which are south of N'Djamena and basically commercial trading towns. So we have had some of that but simply because the population is smaller and spread around in a rather large country geographically. It's three times the size of California with only eight and a half million people. So you haven't had quite the effect you've seen in some countries.

*Q: Do we have anything like Peace Corp? Do we have Peace Corp there?*

GOLDTHWAIT: When I got there we did not have Peace Corp. I mentioned that AID had closed about four years earlier; Peace Corp had pulled out about five years earlier or about a year before AID or maybe it is the other way around. I immediately started lobbying the Peace Corp to come back and they returned about a year before I left so I was able to see the first of the volunteers go through their six or seven month in-country training and actually get out to their villages. One of the very last trips I made in December 2003 was to go with the Peace Corp director and visit four or five of them in their villages and I guess we spent about three days doing that. I considered that my principal accomplishment during my time in country. However, in 2006, because instability was growing in the country the Peace Corp decided to pull out again so they are no longer there.

*Q: What caused the instability?*

GOLDTHWAIT: It was the decision by the president to...let me go back and start over. I mentioned that there was always at the time I was there a sort of a low-key rebellion in the far north. Sometimes worse but it pretty much petered out by the time I left. There were a number of reasons why it had died out. First of all, the Chadians I think were not as dissatisfied with their government as some of their neighbors were with their own governments. The oil project was coming along and everybody was looking forward to having a little bit better income because of that. But there was still this residual hope that either through a democratization within the ruling party or through the president leaving office at the end of two terms there might be a better chance at fairer elections. So I think for all those reasons things remained somewhat stable. But when the president decided that he wanted a third term a lot of that went out the window.

*Q: What about, let's sort of do some of the boundaries. What about you mentioned the Central African Republic. During the time you were there what was Chad messing around with the Central African Republic or was it not?*

GOLDTHWAIT: Well the situation that you have along pretty much all of the borders of Chad is that tribal groups spill over those borders; this is no surprise in Africa, which is the case in most countries in Africa. The tribal groups in the border areas often have more affinity with one another than they have with their ruling governments. Small incidents tend to spill over those borders. In other words, if you have an incident in Central African Republic and there was a coup d'état there, you may very well have people from the border tribes fleeing north into Chad and likewise the Darfur refugees began to come into Chad initially because their extended families were resident in Chad and could support them. This I think tends to make for rather sensitive relations along all the borders and small little incidents I think tend to become bigger incidents and certainly you have suspicions when the tribal groups around the borders are involved in conflict in the neighboring country.

*Q: What about the Sudan? I mean Chad pretty well abuts on the Sudan above Sudan's north-south conflict doesn't it? In other words, they have a Christian south...it doesn't spill over into Chad does it or not?*

GOLDTHWAIT: No, it really does not or at least until the Darfur situation it did not. During the time I was there the relations with Sudan were really pretty good. The presidents visited back and forth once or twice and on the whole their relations were not bad. The border areas along Sudan were peaceful; I was able to travel up and down that border on the Chadian side on one of my trips. I would say things were relatively calm; it was only when the refugees began to spill over from Darfur that that situation started to intensify. As the refugees spilled over some of the Sudanese groups, Janjaweed groups that were fighting tribal groups from where the refugees came they began to chase them into Chad and that's when the situation politically between the countries began to worsen. Chadians...

*Q: Was this during your time?*

GOLDTHWAIT: The Darfur situation began to be serious during the last year I was there. We had refugees coming into Chad but not to the degree that their extended families couldn't cope and you didn't yet have the Janjaweed and the other Sudanese groups coming into Chad and fighting Chadians. That began after I left.

*Q: Well what about Libya?*

GOLDTHWAIT: The relationship with Libya and Chad is a love-hate relationship. Actually President Deby got his start, if you will, as the general in charge of Chadian forces fighting the Libyans back in the mid-'80s when Libya occupied the northern quarter of Chad. He developed this famous tactic by which he drove the Libyans out of the country.

*Q: These were the Toyota wars?*



GOLDTHWAIT: The Toyota wars, yes. The Libyans had a very large military encampment called Wadi Doum and most of their occupation force was concentrated there and they didn't really attempt to control much of the countryside...

The Libyan soldiers were not terribly well trained or enthused about being in Chad. The Chadians at that point, had a certain sense of almost nationalism that was propelling them. After a bit of fighting around Fada and a few other areas the Libyans pretty much retreated into Wadi Doum and they had about 15,000 men there. The Chadians developed this tactic, or had developed this tactic, where they would drive the Toyotas that had machine guns mounted on top of the cabs, they were Toyota pickups, you know a dozen soldiers in the back and machine gun mounted on top; then the drivers can go very, very fast even through the desert. The Libyans would rely mainly on mine fields around the encampment to protect them. So they were not terribly, terribly vigilant. One day Deby got his troops and his Toyotas and drove over the minefields so fast that the mines exploded after the Toyotas were already passed, they went in and with machine guns they literally mowed down thousands and thousands of the Libyans. The Libyans then decided that they needed to negotiate an exit from Chad. That's how he got his start.

He had a good degree of popularity as a result of that and then later he threw out Hissène Habre who was the president at the time all that was taking place. That would have been in the early '90s, about '91 or '92. He then followed the same route that these rebels took from Sudan the other day coming across the main communication routes and from the east.

*Q: Well during the time you were there did Qadhafi pull in his horns pretty much?*

GOLDTHWAIT: He would periodically lend support to the festering rebellion in northwestern Chad sometimes giving them more support, sometimes a little less support. At one point the Chadians discovered that there was a rebel camp 100 miles into Libya as the Libyans were allowing as a kind of safe haven and the Chadians went in and took it out. Qadhafi, I believe, decided not to play around quite so much after that.

But they have this love-hate relationship. Libya has traditionally given Chad a fair amount of aid including military aid on some occasions but at the same time the Chadians know better than to trust them.

*Q: Did Nigeria being an English-speaking country...they had a north-south thing did that have any particular influence?*

GOLDTHWAIT: Not a lot. I would say relations with Nigerians were pretty good. Nigeria had two responsible ambassadors during the time I was there and so their relations were probably about the best among the neighboring countries. Relations with Cameroon were not bad although occasionally there were tensions with the Cameroonians because pretty much everything Chad imports has to come up through Cameroon and if the trade gets bogged down the Chadians wonder if the Cameroon government is somehow putting obstacles in place.

*Q: Did Chad feel itself part of a Francophone-African entity or was there such a thing at this point?*

GOLDTHWAIT: Well, Chad was, is, a member of what the French call La Francophonie, which is an international organization of French speaking countries including countries like Canada and Lebanon and Egypt where French today is a minority language. That organization actually had a meeting in Chad shortly before I left and the French spend big dollars to keep it going. So in that sense there was a feeling of an affinity with other African French speaking countries through that organization and I think particularly with Niger, which is very similar to Chad in many ways new, it also had a close affinity.

I should mention economically a number of these countries are members of the FCFA franc zone so their economic relations are very strong.

*Q: I can't think of his first name but Francois Mitterrand's son who was very much Mr. Africa in the French government. At one point was he a figure at all?*

GOLDTHWAIT: No, I don't really recall that he ever came to Chad while I was there and I don't recall very much about him.

*Q: You didn't have diamonds in...?*

GOLDTHWAIT: No.

*Q: Diamonds and oil can really cause problems and I think diamonds are almost more pernicious. They are easily portable and easily corruptible.*

GOLDTHWAIT: Yes. Oil you pretty much have to have a big company and a big installation. The problem with oil is where the money goes but none of us gets paid.

*Q: Was there a feel that money was heading off to Swiss banks or did the president have villas on the Riviera and that sort of thing?*

GOLDTHWAIT: He was certainly less ostentatious, he and his family than, a lot of other people. I'm reasonably certain however, though that they had managed to certainly put resources offshore, I believe he probably has an apartment in Paris as do many, many prominent Chadians. But one of the things that I always thought limited the corruption was simply that until the oil money started flowing there was just not much money. The big sources of revenue were the cotton monopoly and the sugar monopoly.

The sugar monopoly was privatized and the cotton monopoly was theoretically in the process of being privatized, I'm not sure that's ever happened however. The government really wanted to keep that so they would have one cash cow left.

*Q: By the time you got there I guess you no longer had the USIA operation on public diplomacy. What were our people doing with public diplomacy as far as leader grants or English speaking*

*reading library? I mean what were we up to?*

GOLDTHWAIT: We had a fairly active English language program. We had a fairly active program of visitors representing American culture coming through, we had authors and speakers, even musicians coming through. The public diplomacy officers who were there tended to do a lot of outreach to the university and other cultural institutions in country. We even had public diplomacy training programs that went a little bit in the direction of democratization. For example, we had a program that supported the training of the staff of legislatures. So we actually helped the staff form an association and develop relationships with other such associations in other African countries. So we had a pretty active public diplomacy office and I would have to say that the individuals who came out, as our office heads were quiet qualified.

*Q: Who were they?*

GOLDTHWAIT: One was Frank Huffman. He was actually doing a one-year TDY (temporary duty) and he was a senior Foreign Service officer. The other individual who was there most of the time I was there was Kay Moseley. She was an extremely out-going person making a second career in the State Department. So they were both very senior people in terms of their experience and they were highly qualified.

*Q: Did you find that you were up against a certain amount of opposition from the French for trying to spread their culture?*

GOLDTHWAIT: No, really not for a couple of reasons. First of all, the French culture was already much more dominate and I don't think they really felt that threatened by us. Secondly, there was a very strong interest on the part of the Chadians particularly in English language partly just as an alternative to the French but party also because of the oil project which meant that it was becoming much more important to speak English.

*Q: Did you find that this whole oil business was quite new in Chad and you know, oil people are oil people, I mean, sort of oil operators coming around and sniffing around doing whatever oil explorers and investors do. Was this a problem for you?*

GOLDTHWAIT: No, it was not. In fact, I would say we had very, very few problems. The management of Exxon Mobile was very careful; the oilmen, if you will, lived in their own encampments in the middle of the oil zone. They had a curfew and they really didn't cause any real tensions between them and the local people. You had some disappointment because there weren't more jobs for Chadians right off the bat but over time there have been more jobs for Chadians. There was an expectation that you would have a much larger employment impact than the projects ever intended to have and that had to be managed a bit. But some of the positive influences came in related industries. There was a tremendous boom in the security industry, the oil project contracted with local enterprises for security and so you had three or four security firms which grew up overnight employing several thousand people between them. You had a similar growth in trucking to handle all the imports of the equipment up from Cameroon and you had Chadians benefiting from that. So you did have some in the construction industry, which took off to a limited degree because those people that did have some income from the oil project

wanted better houses.

*Q: How did you find sort of on the social side, how did you find the Chadians? Were they aloof, approachable, I mean, just getting to know them?*

GOLDTHWAIT: I found them to be relatively warm. I never got too terribly close to them, at least because for me as an ambassador there was always a certain formality. Most of my colleagues in the embassy managed to develop what I would call real friendships. I guess I would say I have one real friendship with a Chadian which I didn't realize until I went back to country two months ago and seeing this gentleman who was one of the principal businessmen in Chad and going back and calling on him again really sort of cemented that friendship. So I guess I could say I have one now and it is much warmer now that I am no longer the sitting ambassador.

But the government people tended to be reserved but you could tell that there was a genuine appreciation of certain things that were done. One thing that we did sort of mid-way through my time there was launch a blood drive. One day there was an article on the front page of the daily newspaper which was somewhat under the government's thumb that said there was a great crisis in the hospital because the blood supply was down to about ten pints and all of those were reserved for specific family members who were patients in the hospital so there was virtually no blood for traffic accident victims who would be brought in on a stretcher. The health practitioner in the embassy came in and said to me later that day that he wanted to organize a blood drive among the embassy personnel and I said that's a great idea. Well we got it all organized within about three weeks working with the hospital and he had no reason to be so outgoing but again like the public diplomacy people this guy was a go-getter and he had gone out and gotten to know people at the local hospital and the other clinics around town and was very active. Well they imported the blood collection supplies from France and so about thirty of us trooped over to the hospital, which was pretty much right across the street from the embassy. So the next day in the paper on the front page of the paper there was my picture with blood implements in my arm giving blood. Of course, no Chadian minister would think of doing that sort of thing but that tiny thing made a real impression on a lot of people both average citizens and opinion leaders in the country.

The Grand Imam, whom at the suggestion of one of my colleagues in the embassy, I had begun to call on, long before 9/11, saw the picture, brought a delegation of his council to the embassy, paid a courtesy call on me to thank me for doing that for Chad. As a result of that, when I left country even though by that time we were involved in Afghanistan and the war in Iraq the Supreme Islamic Council presented me with an award thanking me for my work there in Chad. As he told me I was only one of three ambassadors that they had recognized this way in the twelve years that he had been in the position of supreme Imam in country. So that meant a great deal and it meant a lot to me and I think it showed the way in which we managed to get some outreach in unique ways.

*Q: What about you're in a country which is majority Islamic and you have Osama bin Laden, the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center in New York and all that. How did that play for you? For and after what was happening in Chad this fermenting Islamic clause?*

GOLDTHEWAIT: There was not a lot of fundamentalist sentiment in my view of the Islamic community in Chad. The Grand Imam, although he is a former general, took a very moderate approach, he very much wanted Islam in Chad to be a religion of peace and he didn't want particularly any strife between religious groups, Christians, Moslems and he didn't want strife among various groups within the Islamic community. When he saw a danger that something might happen in that direction he did his best to defuse it or stomp on it. I think he succeeded.

When 9/11 took place as in so many parts of the world there was this enormous outpouring of sympathy for us. We, of course, had a condolence book; we had pretty much everyone in the government and most of the other people that we had as contracts around the city and all of those opposition leaders and hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of ordinary Chadian citizens come to sign that book. So there was this immediate and enormous sympathy. Later, of course, we began to take action in Afghanistan but that went down fairly well, there was no real problem. Then after that, of course, when the Iraqi invasion came in it was pretty clear to me that from the get-go they had already determined that they wanted to invade Iraq and get rid of Saddam Hussein. I thought that was...I was opposed to that personally from the very beginning and one of the difficult things that I had to do was come up with a rationale that I could present publicly that I thought would pass the laugh test and that I could present privately to the government as to why we were doing this. Basically I threw away the talking points that came out from the Department and came up with my own. The thing I finally determined that I would say that might justify our action was that Saddam Hussein was the one sitting ruler in the world who had used weapons of mass destruction against his own people. That rather than the various fears about what weapons of mass destruction he might still have was what I presented as justifying our action even though personally I was opposed to it. I almost wrote and sent a dissent cable and talked to my people back in the Department who said, "You know ambassador's don't really do that sort of thing so you probably really shouldn't." So I not knowing the State Department as intimately as I might have liked I took their advice on that.

But the interesting thing was the government's reaction when I went in and told the foreign minister this is what we were doing and why. He wasn't really concerned. He said, "Well you know Iraq's a long way from here and we have our own problems." Reading both his words and his body language what I took away was that this government, which had taken power by military force itself, was taking a kind of an oblique pleasure in seeing the greatest democracy in the world resort to military action itself in our opposition to a sitting dictator. I thought to myself well if I needed another reason to show why this was the wrong thing to do the way in which they are reacting to this... The Chadian government saw it as a kind of back handed legitimization of their own use of force to gain power.

*Q: We have lost an awful lot of morale high ground, I think. Were you picking up from other ambassadors and also from the Chadian government and their ties to France sort of a dislike or almost contempt of George Bush, Jr.?*

GOLDTHWAIT: Certainly not from the Chadian government, they didn't know him well enough to have a strong dislike or contempt. As I say, the resort to military action didn't have a negative impact on them per se. Nor what I think some of the constraints that I think this

administration has put on our own domestic civil liberties, that wouldn't bother them. The opposition groups were perhaps disappointed. I think there were little signs that I would read from them that they thought we had moved somewhat away from being a sort of beacon that we might have been to them at one time. If anything, that pushed them back a little bit closer to the French who in many ways had strong ties to... the government had ties to the French, but different people within France on the part of the opposition. But they felt perhaps pushed a little bit more back to those traditional relationships.

*Q: Was there any particular...was Chad just too far removed and not sophisticated enough to have the equivalent to the intellectuals of France and the chattering class there?*

GOLDTHWAIT: You had a very small chattering class and they tended to be the ones that opposed the oil project, they tended to be well-educated southerners who had done their university work in France. It was a pretty small group. They ran to the opposition newspapers basically of which there were five or six and they were weekly's they were not daily's. They were university professors, a few people like that and privately I got to know one gentleman who was a medical professor at the university. The University of N'djamena graduated its first class of about a dozen doctors while I was there and he was one of the instructors and I played tennis with him a couple of times a week. We had a doubles game that we played. He didn't hide his criticism of the government at all when we were just out there on the tennis court.

*Q: Had the Saudi's made any effort to create Madrassas or the fundamentalist's schools in Chad?*

GOLDTHWAIT: They were financing the construction of a lot of mosques around the country. I don't believe they were actually creating Madrassas although we were becoming a little concerned by the time I left that maybe there would be some activity in this direction.

*Q: You were there five and a half years.*

GOLDTHWAIT: Four and a half.

*Q: Four and a half years. This is a long time over four years and through a change of administration. How do you describe this?*

GOLDTHWAIT: Well it was not my own fault. It was accidental you would say. It was because of a mistake I think someone else made. A normal tour of an ambassador is three years. I was getting close to the end of my third year and I was back here in Washington for consultations and the person who had been selected, not yet formally nominated to replace me, later in that year which was probably April of '03, no April of '02. In fact he invited me for dinner with him and his wife at their house in DC. We had a nice dinner and he dropped me back at the hotel. Also at the dinner was the woman who was going to be coming out to replace Paul Rowe the DCM (deputy chief of mission) Casey Casebeer. He brought me back to the hotel seconds after dropping her off where she was staying and the last thing he said to me as I was getting out of the car was, "Oh yeah, I'll just mention I'm having this little heart operation next week but I'm sure I'll be fine by August when I get out here." I thought to myself heart operation, Chad, not a

single cardiologist in the country, is this gentleman really coming? I began mentally to prepare myself to stay on longer. I was thinking of longer in terms of a few months in terms until another candidate was located. He didn't tell anybody that he was going to have this operation and he went in for his physical examination in July I guess just before getting his medical clearance. By that time, the annual process for career ambassadorships was so far along that there was no one available to be a ready successor. I kept watching to see if his nomination had been released and it was not and it was not and it was not. It was not until October and I made one or two calls back to ask, "Well gee are things still on track?" I was just told, "Well, there's been a delay here." Finally in October I got a call it was from Don Yamamoto who was the P DAS at that point in the department asking if I could be thought to stay on for an additional year because the person was unable to come due to this heart condition that he hadn't told anybody about. So I said, "Fine, I'm willing to stay an additional year." I was enjoying myself in the job and so I think I probably set a record for the longest serving U.S. ambassador in Chad.

*Q: Is there anything else we should cover in Chad?*

GOLDTHWAIT: Well let's see let me look at my little notes here. Oh, just a couple of things, two, three things quickly. I was rather pleased at the way in which I thought I was able to, and others in the embassy were able to, balance the relations between keeping cordial relations with the government on one hand and maintaining our contacts on a regular basis with the opposition leaders on the other. I was told at one point that the Chadian ambassador in Washington had actually complained to the Department about my visits with opposition people but I kept them up and I think they were eventually accepted, as something an ambassador from the United States simply had to do.

I mentioned my effort in returning the Peace Corps and one thing I was able to do was about triple the level of U.S. assistance to Chad from between \$3-4 million a year up to, it peaked up to \$11 million in 2003. That came from a variety of sources not really any from AID but from food aid from my old colleagues in USDA and some other programs we were able to tap into and a little bit of ESF funding that we finally got the Department to allocate. One of the things that I was very pleased with was the founding in my last year of a U.S.-Chadian business association. I found when I went back to Chad two months ago that it was still flourishing. So unlike the Peace Corps that was going to be a permanent accomplishment, at least I hope so.

I think those were the other things that I mentioned that I think are perhaps interesting.

*Q: You alluded to it a bit on the reporting. Did you have a problem...you get relative junior officers coming in to a place where you've got a dictatorship or pretty damn close to a dictatorship and you've got corruption and all and this, of course, is strong meat for young reporting officers to get out there and turn up, look under loose stones and all that. Were you finding any problem reigning in your junior officers?*

GOLDTHWAIT: The person who was the political/econ/consular officer when I first got to post was in that mode even though that person was, I think, maybe even third tour by that time, certainly second but possibly third. But none of the other officers that were the young go-getters that you mentioned were in that section except for one who came out as combination consular

officer and economic officer. His focus was fairly more on the commercial aspect of things, not so much the politics. So he didn't really get into that mode. A couple of the diplomacy people that we had come out were more senior; we didn't have a number of new to the service officers the last year I was there. I'm trying to remember where they all served. I had three or four of them because the second DCM, Casey, started a kind of a series of training sessions for them...oh, they were mostly in the admin area and then I guess the commercial officer. So two or three of them worked within the admin area. Our admin staff grew fairly sharply because the embassy needed a lot of work, it was in really bad shape as a physical plant.

*Q: OK, well then you left there when?*

GOLDTHWAIT: In January of 2004. I went back to my home agency, the Foreign Agricultural Service for about six months. I had been on a limited career extension at USDA before going to Chad, which was granted on the premise that everybody knew I was going to be heading off to Chad. They were kind enough to give me the time that was left on it, that had been left on it when I had departed Chad when I got back so I had six months to kind of get my feet back on the ground in Washington. I did a variety of things. I was the special assistant to the administrator. I worked a little bit on helping the USDA coordinate USDA's activities in Iraq, which were largely developmentally oriented and trade oriented. Then I wrote a paper, came up with some ideas, on how some of the credit programs that I had at one time administered could be brought more into conformance to WTO rules and a couple of things like that.

Then I left the government service in October of 2004.

*End of reader*