CARNEGIE CORPORATION OF NEW YORK ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

The Reminiscences of

Susan L. Woodward

Columbia Center for Oral History

Columbia University

2013

PREFACE

The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview with Susan L. Woodward conducted by George Gavrilis on April 11, 2013. This interview is part of the Carnegie Corporation of New York Oral History Project.

The reader is asked to bear in mind that s/he is reading a verbatim transcript of the spoken word, rather than written prose.

3PM	Session #1 (video)
Interviewee: Susan L. Woodward	Location: New York, NY
Interviewer: George Gavrilis	Date: April 11, 2013

Q: It's April 11, 2013 and this is George Gavrilis speaking with Professor Susan Woodward for the Carnegie Corporation of New York Oral History Project. Good afternoon, Susan.

Woodward: Good afternoon, George.

Q: Thank you for the conversation that we're about to have. I'm looking forward to it. One of the things that I mentioned to you off camera is that I'm a fan because back in the mid '90s, I was reading your book *Balkan Tragedy* in my graduate courses on ethnic conflict at Columbia University. And so I'm at least substantively familiar with your work and it's really nice to put a face to the substantive projects.

Woodward: It makes me feel very good too that somebody read it. [Laughs]

Q: Well, a lot of people read that book. And I would like to have some of your thoughts on that and how it came to be. But before that, let's go even a little bit further back to how you came to life. Tell us about where you grew up, your early years of education, your college years, and so on.

Woodward: It's interesting. I was born in New York City but grew up in Minnesota because my parents were from Minnesota and we went back there when I was three. And I was thinking about what I might tell you about myself. There were a number of aspects that I think are important to my eventual evolution. One is that until graduate school, which was at Princeton [University] for the PhD, I was always in public education. It was very important to me. Coeducation, egalitarian, and in a Scandinavian-dominated environment in Minnesota—and as well as my family—that emphasized peace, equality, the idea that progress was possible. I grew up in a sort of hopeful era. My mother was very involved in aspects of the civil rights movement, helping almost single-handedly in a group of three women—two white, one black—to integrate the public schools in Saint Paul in the '60s. African countries were coming on line as independent states and my mother was involved in another project that was to create a summer school for high school kids to teach them about Africa. All of this was, I think, very formative. And of course, it was the beginning of the anti-Vietnam War era. I am part of that generation.

But the next piece that I think is really important was, at the University of Minnesota—where I went as an undergraduate and studied political science and anthropology, mainly political science—there was a long-term program that began in 1948 called SPAN—Student Project for Amity among Nations. You hear it in the title. And we even had—once I became a part of the organization, we had a slogan that I was told came from Eleanor Roosevelt. So I think it's important that that's what we said, although I've since learned that it's much older than that, which was that it's better to light one candle than to curse the darkness. And I tear up even now at how important that idea was to all of us. But this project was student-run, business-sponsored—where you would go and ask businesses to provide money—academic research in a

country in the summer. The countries would change every year and lots of people who were activists in student organizations and in political science whom I knew had been on this program. So I, of course, applied. And the country in Europe that was chosen for the year I wanted to go was Yugoslavia.

At this point, I had always been doing work on African political development. That was my main interest and coursework, particularly papers on Kenya and Nigeria. That's what I thought was most interesting. But I went on this project. And, again, for looking back at how important it was to me, was that this was both to do your own field research in the summer, then write a thesis when you get back, under the supervision of professors—in my case, at the University of Minnesota—it was a program that was nine Minnesota universities and colleges—but to then go to high schools to tell students about the country, this sort of person-to-person, "Let me tell you about Yugoslavia and of how these people are so great and what you'd like to know." That was the Project for Amity among Nations component. There was a real community outreach of scholars, people who had done research, even though of course I was only not yet twenty.

And the other component was Yugoslavia itself, that is to say, I went with the project to study what we now call political socialization—how people learn their attitudes about politics and how to participate, whether to participate—by doing a study of the Yugoslav Student Association. The Student Association is the name for the one of university-level youth. At that time, because it was the summer, the Student Association was busy organizing student leader conferences. So I got to go to Ljubljana and Dubrovnik, all these beautiful places where the conferences were, because Yugoslavia at the time—partly as one of the leaders of the non-aligned movement, but

partly because of its independence of both east and west blocs—was the only place that students from East and West Europe could meet happily. So I go and I'm meeting people from both sides of the then still iron curtain. It was quite a formative experience for me.

Q: What was Yugoslavia like at the time? Could you paint a picture for us?

Woodward: It was extraordinary, in the sense that they were at the last stages of an economic reform based on the principles of membership in the then General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade—GATT, now the World Trade Organization is its successor—which was liberalizing. It had already begun in '58 but this was the last stage. And the liberalizing was economic. It included a huge jump in prices—inflation—as they were adjusting prices and freeing them up, which people—I remember shops being closed twice in one summer because they had to do inventories and recalculate all the prices. So that was an experience that I've only since learned to study. But also there was a political liberalizing component about it because the reform was very decentralizing.

Many powers—it'd begun already in the '50s, but especially in the '60s—were being shifted from the federal center to the republics, the names of the states of the Yugoslav system. For reasons that I'm not sure I would ever know, it meant that people were also just talking like mad. That is to say, it may more be my stereotype, coming from an anti-communist country—the United States—to what I thought I was finding, to finding an amazing country of everybody talking politics. My favorite experience was being on a bus—overnight bus—going from the capital of Croatia, Zagreb, to the coast in the northern part, in the peninsula Istria, a town called

Rovinj, where I was going to meet up with a Croatian student I met in one of these conferences and see the beautiful Venetian towns on the coast and stay at a student camp. And until very recently on buses in Yugoslavia, there were two—there was a driver and the conductor, who would take the tickets. So there were two, whatever, officials in place. And these two men talked all night about politics. I mean, the criticisms of [Josip Broz] Tito and the country—this idea coming from the United States that they might be afraid to do so—simply not the case. And it was a beautiful country. I had no idea how beautiful it was and how wonderful the food was and how friendly people would be.

Q: You went on to do a PhD in Princeton and I believe the focus of your PhD was Yugoslavia's secondary school system. So was this trip during your bachelor's the formative experience that led you to continue?

Woodward: Yes, very much. I mean, it was within a different context, which is that there was a professor in the politics department at Princeton named Harry [H.] Eckstein—who was very famous in comparative politics and the reason I chose to go to Princeton, among my choices—who had a comparative project funded by the Naval Research—ARPA, I'm forgetting the—Advanced Research Projects Administration [Advanced Research Projects Agency] I think is what it was called—to study his theory of stable democracy. And the theory of stable democracy for Harry Eckstein was that the patterns of authority in important social organizations—those that socialized people, schools, and those that were paths of recruitment into political activity, trade unions, political parties—that if the patterns of authority in those organizations were—his word was congruent—similar to, compatible with the patterns of authority within the state, you

would have a more stable democracy. This was based on his own experience as a youth growing up in Germany, before he left as a young teenager because of the Nazis, and he had tried it in a case study on Norway.

So we were all part of this project, and I was doing Yugoslavia in the project. So I, having—as you rightly guessed—because I'd done this study of political socialization, I went into the schools. So the argument was, I was trying to test his theory—which turned out to be untestable. So none of us produced much of what I think he wanted. I don't now remember how many students were in this group but there were at least twelve or fourteen. Most of us went on to very good careers in comparative politics, but not based on that research or project. But it was also because I wanted to do a study of self-management, the system by which workers managed factories that the Yugoslavs had introduced already between 1949 and 1952, in a non-profit-making organization—schools, theaters, hospitals. Because by this time there was a huge literature on that system by economists and industrial organizations specialists and so on. But no one had studied it outside a profit-making organization. So I was doing two goals at once—one, trying to answer the questions that my adviser, Harry Eckstein, had posed theoretically and see whether there were some evidence to support his argument, but also to do a study of authority patterns in schools.

Q: What did you conclude in your dissertation? What was the main takeaway point?

Woodward: I don't remember.

[Laughter]

Q: Perfectly legitimate answer.

Woodward: What an interesting thought. It's been so long. But I did have fascinating research. I was in lots of schools.

Q: Tell us about that.

Woodward: Well, what I wanted to say, actually, was that I went to do the research at a time when the nationalist sentiments within the Croatian population—first, among intellectuals and linguists about the difference between the Croatian and Serbian language; second, among students, particularly religious seminary students, who were basically anti-Communist, but of course, they would say it differently—and then much agitation about wanting more economic control over investment in Croatia and so forth. It culminates in the end of 1971 with the name MASPOK, the mass movement, and with an effort—motivated by the military fearing the disintegration of the country itself and particularly the very strong, clear influence of the German intelligence services supporting these protests and potential secession of Croatia—that Tito finally clamped down at the end of 1971, the very day I left to go back to Princeton and write up my dissertation.

And so what happened was, I had intended to do good sampling methodology—not random but structured—and I would take the two largest of the six republics of Yugoslavia to do my

research, and then sample schools—technical schools where you trained as a student to be an engineer or a factory worker and gymnasia, where you prepared for universities. They had not yet done the reform they did several years later to unify the school system along the East German or Swedish lines, which they did. And so I wanted to sample types of high schools and regions of each of the two republics. But the nationalist sentiment in Croatia was such by the time I was going into the field that the adviser I was obliged by government authorities to have at the university—a psychologist, in fact, whom I later learned was a minority Serb in Croatia, so he was unusually sensitive to this movement, which was, in part, anti-Serb, though more anti-Serbia in the neighboring republic and Belgrade—that if I tried to compare research in Croatia and Serbia, that he, having been a former secret police official right after the war, had enough colleagues to stop my research at the border that I would not be able to leave.

So what I did was only stay in Croatia and do the research trying to get sampling of Serb areas as well as Croatia—which is quite different, I have learned since. Serb areas of Croatia is not the same thing as comparing the Republic of Serbia. But it was—I learned a great deal about authority patterns. One thing I remember learning that is interesting in light of the end of Yugoslavia is a severe conflict between those people who wanted majority voting and those people who worried that if you didn't have a mechanism of consensus, that all of the polarization and fragmentation of the civil war period during World War II would come back. So there were hints that I didn't pick up on, even in my research, that there were possible fault lines that could erupt.

Q: That's fascinating. And we're going to talk about the fault lines that came to the fore fully about twenty years after this. But tell me, what did you do after you got your PhD?

Woodward: So then I went off to teach. Started an academic career. I was very lucky because I—Princeton had a system that was pioneering—many people followed afterwards—that it was trying to get people through their PhD faster than was the norm. And because it was very strong at the time, and still is, in the mathematical sciences and the natural sciences, it used them as the model that you could start and finish your PhD in four years. So everyone was expected to finish in four years. And if you didn't, you had to start even paying to use the library, let alone not have a fellowship. They finally made a concession to people like me who had to go to a country to do field research. But my field research in Yugoslavia was eighteen months, so that one additional year wasn't going to help me very much. So I went off to my first teaching position before I wrote my doctoral dissertation. So that was very difficult. But when I say I was lucky, I landed a lovely position at Northwestern University, with a very fine political science department, very good students, outside of Chicago, which was very nice. And I began an academic career and did that from 1972 until 1989, '90, teaching at Northwestern and one year fill-in for personal reasons in Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts and then at Williams College, with a year at the Russian Research Center at Harvard on leave from Williams, and then a wonderful nine years at Yale University.

Q: And you continue to work on broader issues of comparative politics but also Yugoslavia the whole way through.

Woodward: No. [Laughs]

Q: You didn't? Okay.

Woodward: It's a very interesting question because when I was at Princeton, the person who was excited—so he said in his letter trying to persuade me as a university student to accept their offer. "I've just been recently doing that, so I know how one could try and make a big case, even if you don't necessarily mean it."—his big case was that [speaks with mock enthusiasm] there was a new field of comparative communism and I was coming to Princeton just at the right moment to do this. But then I chose to work with Harry Eckstein, not with Robert [C.] Tucker, and he didn't forgive me. So he then found a way to do what I would call blackballing me from any teaching on Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union and socialist countries for those first three positions, until I got to Yale. So I was teaching comparative politics, but of Western Europe—at Williams, political theory and international relations, as well as comparative politics—mainly Western Europe.

Q: It must have been very difficult for you to not be able to teach the things that you had been researching.

Woodward: It was. Thank you for saying that. But what was most important is that for professors—especially if you have a heavy teaching load, but always—you want your teaching to support and reinforce your research so that you can write. But if you're having to keep up on a field that you're not researching in the literature to be up-to-date and you're not testing out ideas

that you're researching and wanting to write about with students, there's a divide that interrupts. And so I did not publish very much in the first ten years of my career, regrettably because I was very excited about the work. I did it later but not then.

Q: You're also speaking to a period from the mid '70s through the '80s in political science. What was political science like for a woman professor at the time?

Woodward: [Laughs] Just like a woman student at the university. I was more often than not the only woman in the room. It was difficult in the sense that as a young woman, I had to do a lot to establish authority in the classroom. It was being challenged a lot. So I created habits that have lasted a long time, a lifetime. I think they were good habits but I had to learn how to—not just to talk but to assert authority. I found a little bit later that one of the biggest problems I had were with young women, who were unconsciously competing with me, so weren't really very happy with me at all. I had to learn how to—that was especially at Williams College. It wouldn't have mattered except that Williams College emphasizes student evaluations, and because it's—well, lots of reasons. But I had to learn how to deal with student hatred as a result of envy—very interesting. I don't know whether my male colleagues had the same problem. I don't think so. At Yale, it was very difficult because not only was I the only woman in the department, but I was expected to be—I wouldn't say they'd call it "token," but they needed to look good and have women on committees. So I had a lot of committee work that interrupted my own research that my male colleagues either could say no to or could distribute one committee assignment among twenty-five, where I would have always to be there. So I think it was more the burdens of it.

There was also a lot of prejudice and patriarchy. But you have to shake that off. That just comes with the territory.

Q: Did academia change gradually, suddenly, or perhaps not all in this regard?

Woodward: I don't think it changed, with one caveat. The one change—the reason I say that is that people were pushed—at Yale I had to—I say "had to" in the sense that my chair asked me to and I didn't see how I could say no. I had to chair—then I was the only member of the committee because the other colleague decided he didn't want to do it—a recruitment committee to respond to the president's demand that there be more women on the faculty in the department or we would be put in receivership. So the chair of the department said, "We've got to get more women." So I succeeded in getting us five more women on the faculty at that time. But I say that because I was also then paying attention to issues of women in the profession. I was a member of and chaired the Committee on the Status of Women at the American Political Science Association in those years, so I learned a lot from colleagues about what they were going through and what they had to do.

I had a very interesting—I go back to the Williams College experience—very interesting project with some colleagues, where—Williams had been all-male until very recently. There were very few women on the faculty. And there were some women who wanted to create a women's studies program. And a number of us thought that given the environment at Williams, that would only increase isolation and possibly even reinforce prejudices, but certainly, one could segregate oneself, and that the idea instead would be to persuade colleagues—male colleagues—that what

they were teaching in their fields was ill informed by only looking at male subjects or not taking into account the new research that was coming out of feminist scholarship. So we had a wonderful conference of how to integrate the study of women into the regular curriculum. But that was just the very beginning, to give you a sense of change.

Then, back to what I was saying about this experience trying to recruit women and get my colleagues to give them appointments in the department. I discovered research that had shown that—this was in the ’80s—that in the ’80s, there were fewer women in all the universities in the country on the faculty level and at all ranks than there had been in the 1930s. So this idea of a linear improvement over time, in terms of at least numbers of women, simply doesn’t hold—and I haven’t seen much change, with the caveat I mentioned, which was that—I learned this as a result of the women that we employed. Because they were all in the Yale department, all of these five were junior women. My colleagues weren’t yet ready to give tenure to a woman, and ironically, the first woman they gave tenure to was the economist who was—still is—the spouse of someone that Yale wanted to get back, who had left to go off to your alma mater—your PhD institution, to Columbia. And they wanted him back at Yale, so this was a quid pro quo. So these were younger women and they had changed. They didn’t grow up in an environment that I had, culturally, where one’s behavior was—I’m not quite sure how to say it but, you know, you learned to be a woman, to adapt to a situation in terms of what people expected socially of women. And they were more egalitarian and used to asserting themselves and saw no reason why they should take second place or do more tasks than their male colleagues. That change was really noticeable. But I haven’t paid attention to it recently to see whether this is, again, cyclical or not.

Q: I really appreciate your narrative on that. Tell me—let's switch gears a little bit—how was it that you got back to your work on Yugoslavia and the making of the book, the *Balkan Tragedy*.

Woodward: There are two components. Once I had this appointment at Yale in the political science department, I was able to start teaching on Eastern Europe. So I had a fellowship just before I went to Yale from IREX, the International Research and Exchanges Board, and ACLS, the American Council of Learned Societies, to do a book. I didn't publish my dissertation. I'd written some articles. But I wanted to do a new project. And the book was on unemployment in Yugoslavia and the sort of politics of this, namely the question of how is it that if socialist countries and socialist movements—whether on the social democratic side like Sweden and Norway and Austria, or on the socialist side and the one-party systems of Eastern Europe and China, Cuba—were known for their commitment and successful commitment to full employment, but Yugoslavia had one of the highest unemployment rates in all of Europe. How could this country be stable and how could you explain this?

So I began to do research in the fall before I went to Yale. I took a leave, didn't arrive until halfway through the academic year. And I was working on that book throughout the '80s. Then—and this was, in relation to my Carnegie grants, the most momentous change of my life—in the spring of 1990, very clever people at the Brookings Institution, especially the Director of Foreign Policy Studies at that time, wonderful man, scholar, John [D.] Steinbruner, realized that things were happening in Eastern Europe and that it would be very good for Brookings to have someone come on as a visiting fellow and write a book about the transition, political and

economic, in Eastern Europe. So the so-called wall—not the actual wall in Berlin, but the one we think of as the barbed wire barrier between Eastern Europe and Western Europe—had been breached already in August ’89 by the Hungarians, allowing East Germans to go into Austria. And John Steinbruner decided to request money from the Ford Foundation for this position and I was chosen as that visiting fellow.

I arrived in September 1990 to meet up a week later with a delegation of Slovenes from the Republic of Slovenia whom I was asked by Steinbruner to talk to because his schedule turned out to be too crowded and would I take this over? And I discovered that I hadn’t been paying much attention—I’d been following the changes in Eastern Europe—not so much in Yugoslavia—and also working on unemployment—and now discovered many of my former colleagues—political science professors, economists whom I’d talked to on my unemployment project—were now minister of the economy, president of the parliament, and they were there in a delegation to persuade the United States that it was a perfectly good thing to support their secession. So that was September. And by the next June, Yugoslavia was falling apart because Slovenia and Croatia declared independence. Now mind you, in the meantime I was already saying, “Oh my goodness. I have to do something about getting the U.S. to try either to prevent the breakup or to help make it peaceful,” and was running all around town talking to people and getting to know people in the policy world. I failed, obviously. They weren’t interested. But it was an interesting experience. And by June, journalists were calling Brookings, saying, “Is there anyone there who knows anything about Yugoslavia?” Well of course, I did. So the rest is history. [Laughs] So the irony is that I wrote two books on Yugoslavia and they both came out in the same year because it

took me a while to finish the unemployment book while I was busy at Brookings following the wars and the breakup.

Q: Since that time, between the time when the book came out and the present, you've had a number of Carnegie grants to pursue some very fascinating projects on peacebuilding and post-conflict state-building, two somewhat overlapping but not necessarily fully overlapping concepts. Now, you've had a series of multi-year grants, and so rather than ask you to describe each and every grant, I thought that I could have an open-ended question to you for you to tell us, what was the making of the idea behind those projects and how did they build on one another?

Woodward: I think there were two components. If I were asked this with time to think about it, I might say more. There were two components. One was my experience in Washington for nine years: that here I was, an academic expert on Yugoslavia but in a policy world, and desperately wanting emotionally, personally, to try and stop the carnage in Yugoslavia but being available for congressional testimony, radio, TV, newspaper almost on a daily basis. So trying to have some influence but also being asked for knowledge about how to talk to the policy world, a public audience that was—the idea of Balkan tragedy—I'd been quite astonished—this was a book of four hundred pages and one hundred pages of notes—you know because you've read it. I thought it was too long. That's a long story. But I found that average Americans were reading it. They wanted to know. Whereas in Washington, most people didn't want to know. So I learned a great deal about the policy process and why it is that academic knowledge doesn't have the influence that I was hoping it would have.

I'm not saying that people didn't listen. Journalists listened because they had an interest. Military people wanted to know—I went over and gave seminars at the Pentagon fairly frequently because especially the Army and the Marines knew that this was a new world that they were entering, needing to send troops into civil wars, Somalia being their experience then, and what they would have to do if they went to Bosnia and peacekeeping operations. So I had this notion that there was something wrong with the communication and sharing between policy and practitioners on the one hand and academic knowledge on the other. This was strongly reinforced by the other most important influence on these grants for me while I was at Brookings, which was a nine-month leave when the head of the United Nations [UN] mission in former Yugoslavia, the UNPROFOR [United Nations Protection Force], which was headquartered in Croatia but had three separate mandates for Croatia, Bosnia and Macedonia, asked me to create a small analysis and assessment unit of Yugoslavia experts for the mission. So I began to learn about what practitioners mean by a very different kind of knowledge that academics don't understand. Operations are different and if you can't learn how to talk to those people and take their knowledge seriously, you can't have much influence on what actually happens on the ground. I could go on at length about that but this was a very important experience for me, those nine months.

The other component that fed into this project was this wonderful program officer at the Carnegie Corporation of New York named [Stephen] Steve [J.] Del Rosso, who had a very interesting project in the '90s on self-determination—mainly because of his interest in the Soviet Union and in Russia and ethnonationalism—that by the mid to late '90s he had reconfigured, in

part in response, I think, to President Vartan Gregorian's interests as well. There may have been other influences within the corporation about which I'm unaware. That this new idea of failed states, fragile states, what he was calling states at risk, and the way in which one would act in relation to them, should provide a funding program. I'm sure you've learned about it a lot. It was an amazing program, the number of people who were funded and the work that I was able to do. So my interest was largely to get academic knowledge to policymakers and more communication between these two very different worlds, but also to focus on what I thought was not being studied much and wasn't yet a field of academic knowledge, which was the post-conflict—what the policy world calls post-conflict—work, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, what the economists call post-conflict reconstruction—or at least the World Bank practitioner economists—but the world of politics and U.N. missions has come to call state-building. There's a long debate which you've alluded to—peacebuilding and state-building, are they compatible? Are they the same thing? Is building states necessary to peace? Or is it in conflict with it? But that's what United Nations missions and other interventions at the time of a ceasefire, a peace agreement, after a civil war, now do.

Q: The program that you put together for these grants had a lot of really interesting interrelated components. One of them was engaging with policymakers in more effective ways that you just mentioned. The other that I found fascinating was to build up a network of younger scholars and to create a database where they would be accessible. Can you tell us a little bit about that?

Woodward: Yes. One of things that I would like to—as a kind of preface to your question— say is that when Steve was beginning this program of funding, he was—and I'm sure this was Vartan

Gregorian's interest as well—he was largely focused on people who had fairly direct channels of influence to the policy world and policy orientation—so think tanks, research institutes, nongovernmental organizations who were in the field, not academics. And I was the exception, another reason why I think he's so wonderful. He knew it was important or at least he and I thought it was important. Later, Simon Chesterman, who was at the International Peace Academy, then moved to NYU Law School, so he was the second academic, then, by changing. But this was the idea, that we needed some academic knowledge. But as I have just said, there wasn't much. There was a little bit. We know a lot more now about the causes of civil war, the dynamics of civil war, what leads them to last a long time, what makes them vulnerable or not to settlement. That's grown a great deal, even in the time of these grants for me. But we still don't know very much about the peacebuilding process and how people put their lives together and create stable societies.

And my idea was that, who's doing this research? It's the younger scholars. It's a new field. And it's the younger scholars who, whether fewer family obligations or less risk-averse ages, are willing to go into the field. And in what are risky circumstances—conflict-based, it might even be violent or might be the kind of people who are coming to terms with the traumas they've been through or war. So it's younger scholars who are doing this research, those who were doing it for their PhDs, their doctoral dissertations, or those who are just at the first postdoctoral—I mean, the first post-PhD—research. And that we don't know who they are because they're still in graduate school. So let's create a database of who they are, what they're doing, so that people can begin to see what research is coming online. Secondly, so that they can benefit from a network of each other because as younger scholars they're going to go into a university setting

where they are the only one working on this project, just by the nature of the first—it's only when you're quite established and senior that you might be at a university where you've got two or three colleagues doing the same work. So the network would be supportive of their research and their interaction.

And third, that people were already beginning—particularly with the United Nations, but also at the World Bank, in the U.S. in the State Department, and certainly in the Department for International Development in Britain, the OECD [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development] Development Assistance Committee—more and more people were beginning—policy people, practitioners were beginning to say, "We need rosters of people who have expertise on countries and issues of transition that we don't know about." So I thought it would also be a good resource for them.

Q: Brings up a really important implication, and one of them is regarding impact on policy and policymakers. Do you have particular examples or instances that come to mind where you had these younger graduate students or a network of scholars getting in tune and affecting policymakers?

Woodward: Not many. Part of what I learned from all of this work on these three grants at Carnegie is how difficult it is to bridge the worlds, partly because scholars themselves are not very interested in talking to policymakers. Why should they? They're not rewarded for it. They don't get promoted on those grounds. So even if they're really interested in having influence but are working with a twenty-four-hour clock, they're going to do the work that gets them promotion within their career. But more importantly, the policy and practitioner people are really

not interested in hearing. There's a variety of reasons but over time, I became more and more discouraged about the various efforts that we were making. I think there are solutions to that and I'm pursuing some of them. But it was based largely on experience in response to your question, that is to say, how much influence did they have? Now, that said, what I did, I can give you lovely examples of people who were—especially people in the United Nations missions who were on the ground, let's say someone who was Head of Political Affairs or Head of Civil Affairs. People who would be mainly working these issues, the political ones—building states, rule of law, market transitions and so forth—who would then go, but were head of whole departments in a U.N. peacebuilding mission, whom I would know. And they would say, "Okay, whom should I talk to? I'm going there." So I was a constant intermediary facilitator of these younger scholars. I would know who was an expert and people would ask me.

Q: Are there particular countries for which this happened?

Woodward: It certainly happened with Congo, with the Democratic Republic of Congo and the work in Eastern Congo. It certainly happened on Liberia, a little bit on Haiti, although we have more knowledge—because the U.S. has been involved in Haiti so long, there was less need for it. I would argue that on a little bit on Afghanistan, and certainly on Bosnia and Kosovo, and that would be me as well.

Q: I noticed in the process of doing research for our session that one of the things that you had mentioned in your projects was the importance of what you called "inside-out studies." Can you tell us what that is?

Woodward: Yes. It was the first project with Carnegie. Alongside this idea of a younger scholars' database and network is that I was increasingly frustrated with the way in which policymakers in Washington or the United Nations, the big players in this field, didn't listen to locals. They would go into a country and we still—this is a major criticism in the literature. It doesn't begin with me. I just experienced it a lot—which is that they listen to themselves, their own in-house knowledge. I have a colleague in Norway who has even written about the fact that the only experts on countries are foreign experts, or a Timorese colleague who found that the first year after the Indonesians left and they were beginning to put pieces back together again was just scrambling to get food and grow grain and so forth. The second year was having to learn all of the language of how the outsiders were talking about East Timor and how to talk to them. And you can't know a country as well as I know Yugoslavia without having a great deal of respect for local experts, for professionals in that country. So the idea was to get people from the countries in conflict or in peacebuilding operation situations to talk themselves about what role they played in trying to bring peace, what role they played in state-building, what their analyses were. And so the idea was to have them write papers instead of outsiders. And one of the things that I think is interesting is we had a workshop on the papers I commissioned—because this will be a book—and to it I invited colleagues from the State Department who were very experienced, Jason Aplon and several colleagues from the U.N., and I remember Jason in particular, this wonderful American, who said, "Nobody's ever done this. We always say we should listen to them but we never do." So it was a kind of affirmation that this was a good idea.

Q: How are you planning on building on this?

Woodward: Well, I already have commissioned more papers from people within countries: a wonderful one by a woman activist in the Philippines, one about her work on how important women are to peacebuilding, and they're ignored in the negotiations but they have to do the actual work of implementation at the local level, what she calls horizontal peacebuilding; a woman who is the director of the peace research institute—I'm forgetting the name of it right now—in Managua, Nicaragua [Centro de Estudios Internacionales], to do interviews. This was her idea, but provoked by our request, to write something about the peacebuilding that they had been supporting because they have a wonderful project in Nicaragua to get ex-combatants together, people who had been Sandinistas and those who had been Contra, and finding that even though they've been on the opposite side of the war, they had more in common at this point because both of them had been denied the promised payments that Violeta [Barrios Torres de] Chamorro, after winning the elections, made to them. So they had a common interest in working together and they became a very important organization. So I asked Zoilamérica Narváez [Ortega Murillo] to write a paper about it. She chose to interview some important people and it's a wonderful record of what they were doing, including the fact that, as she said, two of these had since, not long after her paper was written, died, and so this information would have been lost. She was so pleased at the opportunity.

Those are only two examples. I have another Nicaraguan friend Alejandro Bendaña, who was head of the United Nations Development Programme's rule of law program for Somalia, based in Nairobi, for the last three years—he left last year—who, though Nicaraguan, working in Somalia, was bringing his own experience from Nicaragua to a very innovative and ingenious

way of getting Somalis themselves to be a part of what they were doing, rather than imposing externally designed programs. So those are examples of how I'm continuing.

Q: Do you have a particular story or example of how your Nicaraguan colleague did this in Somalia? That's fascinating.

Woodward: Well, I'll give you the reference to the paper that he wrote, which is fascinating. But the idea is that—his idea is, you only have a system of justice that is just insofar as women are treated justly—nondiscrimination, equality before the law, can go to courts and get a fair hearing and so forth. So the focus should be on what happens to women. At the same time, you have to respect that the context that women are working in is not the same as, let's say, a very wealthy, long, two hundred-year liberal rule of law system like the United States—that they have to face patriarchy and the role of tribal chiefs and what the role of women are. So it's only if they can take control. That is to say, if you have a program that empowers women but empowers them not in terms of requiring them to be at certain quotas in the parliament or lawyers taking their case to court where they then have to do something that doesn't allow them to return to their families or their communities because the decision was violating local norms—not setting a set of rules that international human rights activists think are good but to work towards that by working within the system. But it's a complex system he developed. I'm not sure I can say it in a few words.

Q: Well, that's quite all right. I think the words that you use are vivid enough.

Woodward: Thank you. [Laughs]

Q: I wanted to backtrack just a little bit to something—

[INTERRUPTION]

Q: Susan, one of the things that you mentioned earlier is your role as a mediator in the project in terms of bringing young scholars together, putting them in touch with policymakers, and so on. And that work—having gotten to know the intricacies of your grant projects a little bit from the inside out in preparing for this interview, I was rather—it made quite an impression on me, your use of the term "mediator." So I was hoping you could tell us a little bit about the emotions, the logistics, the challenges, the highs as well, of doing this project from the inside.

Woodward: Well, I think I'll start with the challenges, that administratively it was very difficult because I needed students who knew the literature more than they did. Trying to find someone for a postdoc was very difficult. The people who would have the knowledge that I needed had good academic jobs, and I'm at a university where the administrative support isn't what I would like. So that was a lot of work and I wished I could change that. But I also then had wonderful students over the years that I was able to fund as research assistants and administrative assistants, whose lives I think were truly—they learned a lot and went off with a great sense of what they'd learned and lots of administrative experience and maturity that was really very good.

Another challenge that was very difficult is—and I think this might be true regardless of where I was—was trying to find new voices, particularly from the South, among practitioners and

scholars who were doing this kind of research in Southern institutions but whom we didn't know. It wasn't that there were people whom we knew in the South but everyone goes to the same people. There's a very small group of people who aren't already in Northern institutions, even if they first came from places in the global South, and everybody goes to—and I wanted to expand that group. But finding them, it's not easy. The Internet doesn't actually make it easier.

Q: Could you explain that to us?

Woodward: Well, if you send out a notice for papers, for example, the people who apply are Northerners who are in Southern contexts, who are looking for another consultancy. I think probably some of this is that the under-resourced character of the universities, the research institutes in the South—people don't have the Internet as often as they want; they don't have libraries as much as they should; or they're so busy, particularly in universities but also in research institutes, they're so busy putting so many projects together, various consultancies, and teaching in order to make a living wage, that they don't have time to look into this. I had some travel money that I used, to great reward for me, to visit conflict countries or places where people were doing this research, and I would go to—for example, even in South Africa, there was this wonderful institute that was very important in the promotion of democracy already in the '80s and very influential in South Africa. And I went and I said, "You know, I think I'm wrong about wanting to get your voices into the discussion in the North. You're already doing it here. We don't need you there." And they said, "Quite the contrary. We don't feel we're listened to. We would love that." But then to go to the next step is not so easy. I know, for example, there was this wonderful project that Steve Del Rosso and the Carnegie Corporation are supporting to

create an African network, on the basis that we need more of these North-South linkages. And some of my Scandinavian colleagues in Sweden and Norway are doing the same thing. But they, too, they have to work through the networks they know. And I think the next step—I'm not giving up, but it wasn't as easy as I thought, wasn't as automatic to say I want new voices and they will just appear. The next step will be how to do that.

In terms of mediating, it's very interesting. Some of this has been very burdensome. Because once you support, emotionally as well as academically, the younger scholars, you end up having to write letters of recommendation and go to the conferences that they're organizing as keynote speaker. There are lots of tasks that I didn't realize I was going to have. But it's terribly rewarding. Even a conference I went to in Konstanz, Germany, a year ago, and they had invited me and were doing the research because they had come to our social gathering at the International Studies Association meeting a couple of years before and found out about all of this and they were now connecting up with their colleagues. The website that we created, which is filled with not only the data set and the commissioned papers but syntheses of knowledge that I got the younger scholars to write—it's a wonderful resource—will now be taken over, the management of it, by one of the younger scholars who was involved. She's now gone to a peace and conflict research institute and teaching program at Colgate University. But the mediating, it's the way our world works, I think. It's very productive, the idea that—as I mentioned, for example, my colleague going off to Democratic Republic of Congo, open, wanting to learn and asking me—that's a very rewarding role to play.

Q: I think we often take the word “network” for granted when we use it. Sometimes it is as if it’s almost like an inanimate thing that just exists. But could you give us an indication of how much work it takes to keep a network like the one that you’re creating alive and going and growing?

[INTERRUPTION]

Woodward: I don’t have an answer to this one because I didn’t do it.

Q: I can ask another question.

Woodward: Yes. I think maybe you should because the fact is that I don’t think the answer—I mean, it takes more work than I have.

Q: It’s a lot of work, yes.

Woodward: Yes.

Q: Yes. I mean, curatorship is tremendously difficult for these things.

Woodward: It’s a full-time job.

Q: Yes.

Woodward: And I was doing all this along with—I wasn't on leave in any of this time.

Q: Yes. Okay.

Woodward: It's a nice question but—

Q: All right.

Woodward: —I don't have an answer.

[Laughter]

Q: I'd like to then perhaps talk a little bit more about policymakers and why they seem increasingly impervious to being influenced.

Woodward: Yes.

Q: It's a question that we all have to struggle—I struggle with it all the time in D.C. with my organization.

[INTERRUPTION]

Q: Susan, earlier you had mentioned the importance of trying to reach out and influence policymakers from our academic perspectives and substantive knowledge. You also mentioned that a lot of policymaking—policymakers these days are increasingly insular, turned in on themselves and thinking about other things. Could you speak a little more to those dilemmas and what it may take to change that?

Woodward: Well, first, I'm not sure it's increasing. I think it's always been there. I don't know whether it's growing. [Laughs] I would need to do research to see if that's the case. This is actually what I've most learned from these grants, is that it isn't enough just to say, "Here, we've got real knowledge that will make you do your work better," that you will improve the outcome of peacebuilding operations and so forth. I really have to go on what others have written about this, that—and it's very much in some ways the same problem that I already mentioned with academics—is that the criteria by which people are paid and promoted within bureaucracies—the World Bank has been written about a lot in that regard but also with, like, the State Department—has nothing to do with success. Let's take the Bank as a good example because it's so clear. You are rewarded for pushing money out the door, not for whether that money had any good output or not. And it's very well-known that any time you do a consultancy to do study projects—for the UN, for UNDP [United Nations Development Program], UNHCR [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees] or any of them, let alone for the development agencies like USAID [United States Agency for International Development]—that if you don't come back with a positive report that they were doing great things, then you don't get the consultancy again. People don't like to hear bad news. They don't like to hear criticism. If you say, "This isn't working and here's why," all they want to do is say, "Well, tell us how to do it

differently." And that's a fair response because it's not enough to just say, "What you're doing doesn't work."

I think there's also—some of it is time. When we talk about policymakers, we're largely talking about people whom you could influence in the sense of desk officers or people in missions, and they have a lot of work to do, writing reports and meeting delegations. It's not as much work as ministers in aid-dependent countries, who have to see four or five delegations from four or five countries a day and never have time to run their railroads or build their dams, but still, it's a matter of time. But there is a prejudice against academic knowledge that somehow we haven't been through the ropes. We haven't been in the field and the hardships. We don't have their experiences and we don't understand. And as I said earlier, my operational experience suggests that there's some truth to that.

But I think the problem is—and this is my only solution so far—is education. If we can get more of this knowledge taught well in the policy schools where people do their master's degrees and go into, let's say, the State Department or USAID. Or as a student I was talking to just yesterday—who is a Marine and was in Iraq doing counter-insurgency and is now studying for a PhD but who still has a practitioner's chip on his shoulder, that we don't understand at he went through and we don't really know what we're talking about when we write about counter-insurgency—was that when I started telling him about some of our knowledge that I wanted him to read, he's an open-minded guy, he said, "You know, we didn't study any of that stuff." And I even know my colleagues at [The United States Military Academy at] West Point, that what they read—let alone at, let's say, Fletcher [School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University] or the

[Harvard] Kennedy School [of Government]. We need to educate people, to get the research to them. We need as academics to translate it into their language more, including options and scenarios, not just on the one hand, on the other hand. And we need—here I have no idea, this is a matter for psychologists and educational psychologists—to see how to break down that barrier that is in part protective of their bureaucratic careers but I don't think is necessary.

Q: Wonderful to—great answer. I appreciate that as well.

Woodward: Oh, thank you. [Laughs]

Q: The one question that I want to end with—and then I'll leave it up to you after you've answered that to leave us with a final thought or comment—is the following. We're now in a second year of civil war in Syria. And I'm sure that you're following it like the rest of us are. When you think about projects you've been working on the past several years and your knowledge of civil war and post-conflict states, what are your thoughts on the future of Syria? And what might we do, looking at Syria from the outside in?

Woodward: It's a terribly discouraging situation. The literature on civil wars shows that on average, these go sixteen years. Second year isn't very—now, that average covers such a wide variety of cases that you could say that, well, of what use is that? But I do know from people who are experts on Syria that [Bashar Hafez al-] Assad has only begun to use his military arsenal and he's keeping most of his good stuff behind, so that they expect an end to this regime but not for a very long time. We also know a lot about the strategies that both rebels, as we're calling

them, and governments use, and he has a simple game: he just has to stay in power. The rebels have to put together alliances among very different kinds of groups—Islamists and not, people from the rural areas, from the urban areas, people of very different educations—and they have to have a post-war platform to build legitimacy behind, not just—they've got it from the outsiders but they don't have it from all Syrians. So they have a much more difficult task. We see this fractionalization. I could probably go on for hours about this. We really know a lot about it now. But the bottom line is it's a very discouraging one, to your question.

What could we do? I think part of the difficulty is we know about interventions, particularly to stop civil wars, but also afterwards, these are massive problems of international coordination and alliance. Every country has their own interests. And they're not about to listen to—why should France listen to the US? Why should the US listen to Britain? We have our own constituencies in legislatures, parliaments, voters, military establishments to listen to. And so much of the problem of the peacebuilding work is that everyone goes and does their piece. Security sector reform—which is the word for transforming military, police, intelligence and courts—is done by seven or eight different countries, each taking a piece. We get a package in a country like Afghanistan or Kosovo that has no coherence at all. The Germans do the police, the Italians do—you know, and so forth—the Americans do this part of the courts, the French do this part of the courts. You can't imagine a country surviving with that kind of a hodgepodge. So what we would do in Syria is subject to the same problem.

I'm very worried that we are in the position that I felt in the early 1990s in testimony before the Congress: being pushed by lobbyists, many of them in the State Department, to say that the only

solution was a military one and particularly a bombing one, where I was saying, "But this is a political conflict. It's not a military conflict. People are fighting about where the borders of new states should be and who's going to be in power. So even if you use military first, you still have to have a way to get a political solution." For a long time, I was opposed to that military argument. Then I thought, well, I've lost this argument. So I will say, "Okay, under the following circumstances, you can use military force in the following way but as long as it's combined with a political strategy." I don't think we're anywhere near moved from where we were in 1992 and 1993. And of course, again, lots of countries sending in arms to Syria with different agendas, whether it's the U.S. or the Saudis or the French. I wish I had a better answer.

Q: Thank you. Final thought.

Woodward: A final thought is hard. I think what I would say is that one of the few pieces of research that the most obstinate bureaucrats, the World Bank types, have paid attention to—I don't think it's changed their work but they've heard it—is how long these peacebuilding, state-building processes take: that they take ten to twenty years just to begin; that our impatience when we do intervene, in hopes of assisting, is truly counterproductive; that we need much more gradual, patient strategies that give power very fast to people on the ground. Now, that doesn't mean to say that—I mean, they were in conflict. So I'm not saying that's a simple thing. But we need to think about time in a very different way. And that's [laughs] my conclusion for my work for the Carnegie grants, is that the fruit of what I've done is only at the very beginning, and I've got at least ten or twenty years more. I hope I have it myself. But at least in terms of the role of education, the role of this network, the role of these commissioned papers that I hope will

become books soon and how they're used, who's using the collection of good syllabi that we put on the website for these courses—that's my final thought.

Q: Well thank you. That is a good conclusion to our session.

Woodward: Thank you, George.

Q: Thank you, Susan. Thank you, guys.

[END OF INTERVIEW]