

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

**A. DAVID FRITZLAN**

*Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy*  
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## INTERVIEW

*Q: Today is May 29th, 1990. This is an interview with A. David Fritzman. I am Charles Stuart Kennedy. This is for the Foreign Affairs Oral History Program.*

*I wonder if you could give me a little about your background to begin? Where did you come from?*

FRITZLAN: I was born in India in 1914. My parents were missionaries. I did all of my secondary schooling in India-- virtually all of it--at English boarding schools. I then came to this country at the age of eighteen. I got my masters at the University of Kentucky in '36, and in '37 I took the Foreign Service exams, and passed the written. The same year I got a scholarship at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in Medford, Massachusetts. But at the beginning of '38 I had passed my oral exam for the Foreign Service and was on the list of those eligible for appointment as a Foreign Service Officer, which appointment I received in July, and my first post was Naples, where I spent a year.

*Q: Did you come in with a class?*

FRITZLAN: I came in with the class of that year. We were a group all together of about 20 or 21. We didn't meet until we came back from our first probationary posts, and then

we met in '39 having been at a post abroad for a year. Then we attended the Foreign Service Officers' training school for four or five months. This was from September '39 to January 1940.

*Q: To back track a little, for the most part most of the people were sent to sort of border posts, and Naples was a little bit out of the way for new officers.*

FRITZLAN: It happened that my appointment was not one of the very first. I was, for one thing, still at graduate school. And I'm not sure that I was sufficiently high on the list because these appointments were made in order of merit. The first appointments I think were made in April and May, and there were limited funds available for travel, the fiscal year ending June 30; so they sent the first group to border posts nearby.

*Q: Vancouver, Windsor...*

FRITZLAN: That's correct, Mexico, and so on, mainly because they felt this would save money. Well, by the time my appointment came in July it was a new fiscal year, so they could afford then to send people to posts that were farther afield. And that is how essentially I got to Naples, which was very lucky for me.

*Q: I am interested both for these interviews, but also my last post abroad was Consul General in Naples. I wonder if you could describe the situation in Naples, and the type of work you were doing?*

FRITZLAN: The situation was that the atmosphere was very unfriendly toward Americans. This was the period when the Berlin-Rome Axis was being formed. I was there at the time of the Munich crisis, and we could see that war was definitely in the offing. As this became the case, our own attitude--that is the American attitude towards this possibility began to emerge in such a way as to make plain to the world that, while we were not about to get into the war, we made no secret of our feelings in favor of Britain, France, etc. This put us at odds with the Axis and in Naples I found myself in an atmosphere that was hostile. We had Italian friends but, generally, they were afraid to be too friendly with us.

As far as my work was concerned, Naples was the office in Italy--the only office--that granted immigration visas. So we were very largely a visa mill. And, of course, this was a period when many refugees were seeking asylum, a place to go, lots of Jews forced to leave central Europe. In some ways it was an onerous kind of work, because it frequently involved one's emotions deeply. One saw these people coming who had really no place to go. They would hope for the United States with its record, its history of hospitality as regards refugees. We were very much circumscribed by the quota system, and in many cases simply couldn't issue visas to people who seemed to have all the qualifications and we felt would have made good citizens in this country. But they were born in the wrong place, for example, and place of birth determined the quota under which they registered. There were other visa cases, of course, which were quite different--the Italians wanting to

come to America seeking better economic opportunities and many of them poor, and some of them were barely literate. So I spent most of my time working on visa matters, immigration matters, and quite a bit of time on passport matters because we had a lot of Italians who'd come to America to find work, to make money, leaving their families in Italy and in the process they'd become naturalized American citizens and under the laws prevailing at that time, if within five years of naturalization they could be shown to have abandoned their ties in America, and many of them did that, they were in danger of losing their US citizenship. They'd made enough money, they wanted to come back to Italy, bring their families, had no immediate plans to return. They had American passports. The question was, how long could they do this without raising the matter of their naturalization, whether, under the law, it was fraudulent or not. We did a lot of work in this field and, frankly, I found it went against the grain since, in many cases, the person concerned simply could not be expected to understand the intricacies of US law. For example, they often signed documents waiving their right to US citizenship, hardly if at all understanding what they were doing.

*Q: They didn't know what they were signing.*

FRITZLAN: Correct. I didn't like it a bit, and I frankly was very loath to use this procedure.

*Q: Was there emphasis from the State Department to push these?*

FRITZLAN: There was. There was considerable emphasis to push these matters to the extent the law permitted, and in such ways that I thought were unfair to a lot of these people. I won't say that I didn't participate in it, I had to. But I was never what you might call an eager beaver in this field. I was loath to do it because I thought in most cases it was unfair, they didn't understand what was happening. I'm glad that not too many years after the war, this whole system of denationalizing people, taking away their citizenship, and so on, was declared unconstitutional by the courts. So that this is totally in the past. We don't do this sort of thing anymore.

*Q: Back to dealing with the refugees, particularly the Jews, but not exclusively. There have been accusations that the Foreign Service and the Department of State was quite callous about the situation. One, they didn't understand; two, there was, at least higher up, a degree of anti-Semitism...not virulent anti-Semitism but it was part of the class system in the United States or something like that. Did you have any feel for this?*

FRITZLAN: I didn't really have any feeling that there was any campaign to keep Jews out, or that there was active anti-Semitism. I know there were people who expressed ambivalent feelings towards certain classes of Jews. The Polish Jews came in for the most of what you might call opprobrium. But I never encountered a situation where Jews as such were discriminated against.

*Q: The problem was the law.*

FRITZLAN: The problem was the law, it was the quota system. The quota of nationalities depended entirely on place of birth, and the quota was so many for one year and it couldn't be exceeded. That's all. And it was small for certain countries. The quotas were arrived at based on the percentage of population from a certain country in the year 1890, or thereabout. The year was picked arbitrarily in order clearly to keep out certain people.

*Q: In other words the great wave of migration came at a certain point and we tried to make it as Anglo-Saxon as possible.*

FRITZLAN: I believe there was such a motive.

*Q: But that was the law.*

FRITZLAN: That was the law, and we had no control over it.

*Q: When you came back, I wonder if you could describe a bit this Foreign Service class you were with of about 20 people. What kind of people were they? What was their outlook?*

FRITZLAN: We reflected basically a pretty good geographical mix. We reflected a pretty good mix between Ivy League schools, and non-Ivy League. The spread in terms of age--I was one of the youngest, I was 24 barely. I think the average age was about 26 or 27, one or two 30 and above but that's all--35 was the maximum, 21 was the minimum. They were, of course, intelligent, they had to be. They were well schooled in the humanities, especially history, political science, diplomacy. Some you felt were obviously more able than others. I'd say as far as social attitudes were concerned, we were all pretty enlightened, and on the whole inclined to be liberal. There were some cases--I remember one member of our class who happened to see me walk into the State Department--with a copy of The New Republic in my hand, which then more than now, was known to be a liberal paper. But not I would say left-wing, left of center. And he advised me in a rather concerned manner not to appear in the Department carrying such a paper. "It might give some people the wrong ideas." I said, "I'm sorry. They would have to accept the fact that I read The New Republic."

*Q: I'm wondering--maybe to differentiate between when you came in because it does reflect the times, that Officers I've interviewed who came in from '45 on, at least up through the '50s, many of them came in with a real sense of mission because obviously by that time the United States was number one. We had the economics ...but there must have been a difference between your outlook because we just didn't have that position. I mean we were sort of on the sidelines.*

FRITZLAN: We were not a super power. You start really with the question, "Why did I, why did we, choose the Foreign Service?" Well, I had long nourished, having lived abroad a good bit of my life, an interest and a feel for foreign countries, and peoples, and

languages. I felt the Foreign Service offered the best means of achieving my aspirations. It was the only job I ever applied for, and I got accepted. I was very fortunate. I had 33 years in it, so I can't complain. I had fascinating posts, which I couldn't have improved on if I'd had a choice. We were itching to get out of the Department at the end of '39 because the war had broken out in Europe, and we felt that there was work to be done. Not that we were going to get into the war, but we wanted to be on the scene, as close to the scene of action as possible. I was assigned to our Legation at Baghdad. I think the sense of mission you're talking about grew with our entry into the war in '41. Once the war was over, we realized that, as the most powerful nation in the world, we had responsibilities, together with our Allies, to reform the state of the world and make large-scale war a thing of the past. And certainly a sense of mission did enter into our lives, our thinking, and our actions. But this is not surprising, is it? We had to help rescue the countries that had suffered, especially in Europe. Hence the Marshall Plan, Truman's Point 4 Program, economic assistance, technical assistance, and all that sort of thing. We were immersed in this more than anything else. I was in the Middle East at the time; Baghdad, Tehran and Basra during the war, and then a spell in Morocco, four years in Tangier. In 1949 I went to Amman to be head of a new Legation, we having recognized the new state of Jordan in the aftermath of the Arab- Israeli war of 1948.

*Q: I want to back track before we get there. You went to Baghdad in 1940. You were there approximately eight months. What were you doing?*

FRITZLAN: I was doing consular, commercial and economic work. Consular work was light since we had few American citizens in Iraq.

*Q: What was the American role in Iraq at the time?*

FRITZLAN: It was very subordinate to the British role. In fact, we didn't have what you'd call a full-fledged Minister there. He was a Minister Resident rather than Minister Plenipotentiary, but that didn't make any real difference. The British were the only people there who had an Embassy. They were really in charge. They had advisers in all the ministries, in effect it was a continuation of the old mandate colonial system under a different name.

*Q: But you weren't there during that brief revolt?*

FRITZLAN: Rashid Ali? It was coming. I left just a few months before it exploded.

*Q: When you were there were you and the others looking at this thing and saying the British are really sitting on a tinder box? Or did you feel they were pretty much in control?*

FRITZLAN: We were ambivalent on the subject. If you recall, in 1940, in the summer June--France fell--Vichy took over, and of course, I don't know why I say, "of course", but it happened that the French representatives in the Levant, that is to say Lebanon and

Syria, offered their loyalty and allegiance to Vichy. So there was Iraq--on one side and there was Syria and Lebanon under Vichy French on the other. It was essential, absolutely vital, that the British keep Iraq from getting into the hands of the Axis. So the idea developed of bringing troops in from India to Basra and Iraq to help counteract the forces in Syria and Lebanon, a potential threat. This the British would do under the terms of their treaty of alliance with Iraq. Now the Iraqi government at the time was beginning to scent the possibility of an Axis victory. And Rashid Ali was Prime Minister at the time, he and a number of his ministers, including some who later professed greatest admiration and liking for the west and what it stood for, were toying, playing, with the Axis agents--Italians, Germans in Baghdad. The British were determined this wasn't going to last. The German and Italian missions were closed and their agents picked up. They then brought in these forces from India, and that is when in May 1941 Rashid Ali in effect invited the Axis in. The British were under severe threat from the Iraqi army, which was a considerable force. And also there was the German air force which was daily flying over Baghdad and threatening any enemies or potential enemies.

*Q: You left before this?*

FRITZLAN: I left before; several months before this.

*Q: We've been talking about sort of, "Gee, the Iraqis really aren't that willing to stay with the British."*

FRITZLAN: The British were acutely aware that the Iraqis were going to do what they thought was in their interest. They had in their own mind lots of reasons to dislike the British, therefore if there was an opportunity to take advantage of British weakness, they were about to do so. Apart from Nuri Said, and maybe a half dozen other leaders who had been with the British in the first World War against the Turks, and who had co-operated since, there were very few Iraqis that really could be trusted. He was one. I could name a few others.

*Q: We'll move on because I want to get your focus on things. You went to Tehran where you were from 1940 to '42. What was the situation in Tehran in that period?*

FRITZLAN: It was very dicey. The German and Italian agents were roaming around the country, and undoubtedly they were preparing the ground for some kind of takeover, as they had been active in the southern part of Iran during the First World War, and caused a lot of headaches and damage to British interests. The ruler was the old Shah, the father of the Shah who died a few years ago. He'd been in a Cossack regiment raised by the Russians in the '20s, made himself Shah; a man barely literate, unscrupulous, ruthless, and you might say by 1940 openly pro-Axis. We were expecting trouble, and, of course, it did come. When Hitler invaded Russia in June of 1941, Russia then became an ally of the British, and they and the British concerted on plans to get rid of the old Shah, and get rid of the Germans and Italians in Iran. This was an area of vital interest to both countries.



Well, in September '41, the Shah was told by the British and Russians about these Axis agents, and that if he didn't start getting rid of them, arresting them and getting them out of the country within 48 hours, there would be demands made upon him to abdicate. In effect this ultimatum was presented, but it was presented after a long period of efforts on the part of the British- -even before the Russians got into the war--to get the Shah to face up to the fact that his country was being used by the Axis and putting him in a non-neutral position. He would never accept this. He would say, "Of course, what you're saying is untrue, and I know better than you, and such people don't exist." In the end he was faced with an ultimatum--do this, this and this, within 48 hours or else you must abdicate. Well, he didn't do it. He was forced to abdicate, and moved out and eventually ended up in South Africa, and his son--a timid, weak, a colorless figure, appeared on the scene as the new Shah. Nobody had any high hopes of him. We thought at best he could be persuaded by the British and ourselves, to appoint reliable, responsible men into his government, and let them get on with things, which is pretty well what he did.

*Q: What were you doing at the Embassy?*

FRITZLAN: Legation, as it was then.

*Q: This was when?*

FRITZLAN: I got there in November of '40, a year later we were in the war. In that year I was again doing consular work, some commercial work. We had quite big commercial deals with Iran at the time, steel shipments, and that sort of thing. Protection of American citizens was also an important function. One traveled a bit here and there; it was difficult to travel, you had to get permits. Naturally, Tehran was a very important listening post at that time; I picked up pieces of information here and there which we made available to our Minister. But really nothing exciting. After we got into the war it was another matter, of course. Then Iran became the route through which most of our supplies to Russia came. I realized immediately what the purpose was when I got a request to go to the British and others to get all the details about the railway from the Persian Gulf to the Caspian, the gauge, the bridges, the height of this, the width of that, and rolling stock and all that sort of thing. So we sent that in. Of course, in the next year things began to roll and we got a lot of equipment by this route, and later I was sent to Basra for a couple of years.

In this period, acting upon requests of the government, we brought in a number of financial advisers, someone to advise on police reform, and an agriculture adviser.

*Q: Did you have the feeling that the United States was beginning to supplant the British? Or was that indeed the case?*

FRITZLAN: The British thought we were. The British were highly suspicious, and resentful of any kind of intrusion, or what was thought to be intrusion on our part. In effect they used to tell us, "Look, we know the Middle East. We know this area. We've

been here for many, many years, we know the Arabs and all the rest of it. Why don't you just help out with money because we're short of money, and let us get on with it, and you back us up every time anything arises in the way of a crisis." Well, we weren't buying that and they became aware of that in due course. But we did try, and to a large extent we succeeded in our efforts to form a kind of harmonious relationship with the British and on the whole we worked together and not at cross purposes.

*Q: Did you find that your greatest diplomacy in you yourself was in dealing with the British?*

FRITZLAN: Oh, almost you could say that. You could just about say that. They felt they could be frank with us, and we felt we could be frank with them, and all the same one had to be diplomatic. But we could be franker with them perhaps than we could with anybody else. At the same time we were well aware of the great strength, militarily and commercially, of the British in the region.

*Q: What sort of feelings were you getting from our people at our Legation, and where you were American officers, about the role of the Soviets? Because they had also moved in, and this became a matter of great concern in Iran at that time.*

FRITZLAN: At that time the Soviets were a problem in a sense. We didn't know what they were up to, what their mission was, what their policy was except to win the war, of course. They were in a large compound with high walls and you never saw them except on very formal occasions, and then there was never any kind of--even though we were allies--any kind of a relationship, except with respect to Chiefs of Mission who would meet and exchange pleasantries. But that was about all there was to it, nothing more. Certainly we weren't surprised when after the end of hostilities in Europe, the areas of Iran that the Russians occupied contiguous to Russia in the north, in particular Azerbaijan, was not evacuated when the Iranian government asked them to do so. And it took, of course, concerted pressure on the part of the British and French, and ourselves--through the UN--to get them out. This was one of the first early victories of the UN.

*Q: Yes, it's often forgotten. To move on, you were in Basra. What were you yourself doing?*

FRITZLAN: This was one of three ports of entry for Russian supplies on ships coming from the US. The others were Abadan, Khorramshahr and Bundar Shapur. Our mission there basically was to do everything possible to facilitate and speed up the unloading of the ships carrying these munitions of war and civilian supplies to Russia. The bulk went by rail from Bundar Shapur on the Gulf. Some goods went by road through Iraq up to the point where they could get into Iran on the highway from Baghdad to Iran-- it wasn't a highway really, but a gravel road. So our mission, as I said, was to do everything possible to expedite the movement of these supplies. This meant working with the port officials, encouraging them, trying to get them to adopt efficient means of unloading and movement. The British were there in a big way helping to do the same thing. We had very

close cooperation with the British on this in Basra at the time. In the stifling heat in the summer, it was incredible really how we managed to do what we did...at any one time there would be 30 cargo ships tied up at the head of the Persian Gulf; Basra, Abadan, Khorramshahr, Bandar Shapur. Each one of these had an average of 50 men aboard. The turn around time was an average of 30 days. So the Consulate was heavily involved. I had problems with seamen drinking paint mixtures for lack of alcohol, seamen who tried to commit suicide and sometimes did. We had a case of a Lithuanian on board who was convinced that he was going to be turned over to the Russians and he had made one attempt to kill himself, and I went on board to talk to him. He had a limited amount of English, but I tried to convince him that he was in good hands, and nothing was going to happen. I didn't succeed; he managed to cut his wrists, and that was that. So I had to arrange his burial.

And then a case of a master who went off his rocker, and he was clearly putting his ship and his men in danger, and we had to make a decision from the reports of the first officer, and his assistant, as to what to do. There were provisions in the Foreign Service Manual for removing a master from his command which is a highly unusual step to take, and a very serious matter. But the Consul decided we had to go ahead and do it. So we held a sort of court of inquiry, and it was done. I don't know what happened in the end, if this man was forced to be restrained and locked up in his cabin, or what. But anyway, the ship eventually left, and that was really the main thing that we wanted to happen.

These ships would come through the Mediterranean, and they would arrive with some of the most horrifying tales. Many were sunk, by the way. They had to go through the narrow waters near Malta, and the German dive bombers were massed, of course, close to this sea lane by Sicily, and the defenses were pretty limited. But, fortunately, many, many got through.

*Q: Why don't we then move on because you went from Basra to Tangier, and you were there for four years from '44 to '48.*

FRITZLAN: That's correct. I went there with Fraser Wilkins. He had been in Baghdad.

*Q: That must have been a fascinating place...*

FRITZLAN: Well, we drove you see.

*Q: Oh, my God!*

FRITZLAN: Oh, didn't you know that? Well Fraser Wilkins, with whom I believe you have talked, was in Baghdad, and I was in Basra, and we were both assigned to Tangier. He had a Ford coupe and he said, "Why don't we drive?" There was no other way of getting there except by a round about way by plane across central Africa, etc. We had to make elaborate plans. We got help from the British on the way everywhere we stopped. It took us about a week to get to Cairo by way of Damascus, Beirut, Jerusalem and Port

Said. There was an air raid at Port Said the night we were there. This was our first experience with bombs, and guns; one of the last manifestations of hostility in the Near East during World War II.

We went on to Cairo and had about a week there. We got very good encouragement from the British who, of course, manned the whole of North Africa right up to Tunisia. They gave us itinerary plans, and authority to draw on POL supplies, and informed people ahead of time that we were coming. We were treated royally by the British and made good progress. The roads were in terrible condition, bombed, mined, bridges were blown so we had to go into the wadis and hope to avoid being bogged down in sand. We never had any trouble until we got to Algiers. By this time we were in the American zone. Leaving Algiers we had a flat tire. It was 18 days from Alexandria to Tangier.

*Q: Incredible. What was the situation in Tangier? Particularly at this time it must have been out of this world, wasn't it?*

FRITZLAN: It was because we'd been living in a deprived state for so long, living on K-rations and God knows what. And if you ever got a drink, it would be some foul Cyprus brandy or something that was almost undrinkable. When we got to Tangier we went to the Minzah Hotel. Tangier then had been for many years a free port, and it had everything. On entering the hotel I felt rather like Muhammad must have felt when he saw Damascus from the hills coming in from Arabia--saw this great city spread out before him. He literally thought he was in paradise. Well, I won't carry it up too far, but still Tangier was fascinating--cosmopolitan, full of shady types, spies, gun runners, you name it.

*Q: Remittance men?*

FRITZLAN: ...remittance, yes, and it was a free exchange market, with a lot of shady business happening. The place was under the Spanish who had moved in after the fall of France in 1940, from their zone in Morocco. They moved in to this international zone of Tangier against all their engagements, treaties, and so on. We never recognized them, naturally, although we had to do business with them as the de facto authority. It was a very interesting period. I couldn't have asked for a better assignment at that time.

*Q: Particularly after...*

FRITZLAN: After all we'd been through, yes.

*Q: The Spanish by this time certainly must have had the word who was going to win. I mean was this reflected in your dealings with the Spanish?*

FRITZLAN: More and more it became reflected because at the beginning they were pretty certain the Germans were going to win, otherwise they wouldn't have moved in. But more and more they became concerned about their precarious position and became

helpful and cooperative. Not as much as we would have liked, however. I'll tell you something interesting, a story which is rather amusing in a way. I was also vice consul at Ceuta where I operated with no staff at all really.

*Q: Was Ceuta still under the Spanish? This is the last post.*

FRITZLAN: One of what they call the places of sovereignty--Plazas de Soberania. It had been Spanish for three or four hundred years.

*Q: They just hung on.*

FRITZLAN: Yes, and they still hang on. Well, after World War I there was the RIF War and they carved out a zone for themselves in the hinterland. I went to Ceuta about once a month for four or five days mainly to spread some Allied propaganda, and they didn't like that a bit. The government told me to cease and desist. In this period--now I'm talking about the beginning of 1945 at the time of the Yalta Conference. President Roosevelt passed by cruiser through the Straits of Gibraltar.

*Q: That's right. Yalta was slightly before he died.*

FRITZLAN: That's correct. It was a few months before the end of the war in Europe. In this period there was still quite a lot of danger from German submarines operating in and around the Straits, and we were very sensitive to this, had been for some time. And our Naval Attaché told Rives Childs, who was our Chargé d'Affaires, that he had good information that there was an agent operating out of an apartment, up in an attic room in Ceuta; using a radio device in communication with Axis agents across the Straits. He said he knew exactly where it was, and all the rest of it. So Childs then got in touch with the Spanish High Commissioner and said, "I know such and such is happening in a certain place." The High Commissioner said, "I'm very surprised if such a thing exists, but if you can kindly come with one of your officers then I will appoint somebody to go with them, and you take them to this place." So that happened in that way, and they got to this place and broke down the door and sure enough found a very surprised and nervous operator with his radio set, caught, seemingly, red-handed. Childs was full of his great triumph. Just about this time Roosevelt aboard his cruiser came through the Straits.

*Q: The Augusta, I think.*

FRITZLAN: So Childs sent along a dispatch to the Department detailing this episode and intimating that he and his staff had contributed to the safe passage of the President through the Straits. When the British learned about this, they were incensed because it turned out that this radio operator was a British double agent. Childs never reported that.

*Q: No, I know. Well, the British interned many of these people. What were your main jobs when you were in Tangier, during the war and after the war? And also, what was the set-up? Was it a Consulate General then?*

FRITZLAN: It was a Legation, and our Chief of Mission had been a Diplomatic Agent comparable to Minister Resident. It's just one grade below Minister Plenipotentiary. We hadn't had a Diplomatic Agent there since John Campbell White had been there, and that was at the very beginning of the war. He didn't stay long. So Childs came out, he then had First Secretary rank. He'd been in the Department, and he came out in 1941 to be Chargé d'Affaires and Chief of Mission in anticipation of the landings about which he'd been thoroughly briefed.

*Q: You're referring to the landings in North Africa.*

FRITZLAN: That was '42. Childs came specifically to act as our representative in Morocco--diplomatic representative-- in anticipation of these landings, and during the period that followed. I must say he was highly industrious, imaginative, and an extremely able representative. Not above taking undue credit for himself sometimes. He'd been a newspaperman. He wrote extremely well.

What was I doing? When I arrived--that was April of '44, my job was information and consular officer. I edited and put out, with some help from the British, a weekly bulletin in French. We got it translated, my French wasn't quite good enough for that. This covered developments in the world with particular reference to America and what we were doing in pursuit of winning the war. It was meant to appeal to a fairly general readership, and it had considerable success, I would say, in affecting opinion among the Tangier populace. If we'd wanted to reach more people, we might have put it in Spanish but we didn't want to make this gesture to the Spanish occupying authorities. And actually Tangier was bilingual. But otherwise I was doing what little consular work there was; political work apart from what Childs did which was most of it. I had contacts with several political dissidents. Tangier was the abode of any Moroccan from the French zone, or the Spanish zone, who was out of favor. These people could come to Tangier, and there they were relatively safe. Wanting support for their cause, they'd come to the Legation and wind up in my office. The French representative complained strongly about my receiving these Moroccan nationalists but Childs, and later Paul Alling who succeeded him, made it plain that we were not closing our doors to anybody.

Well, the reports that I wrote on the basis of conversations with these people, who later became leaders in the Moroccan government after its independence in '55, were, I think, viewed as of little importance or interest in the Department. The feeling was that the French are there, and were going to stay there indefinitely. Nor were my reports received well by our Embassy in Paris.

*Q: This was a straight battle of North Africa that took place in the Department of State...*

FRITZLAN: This was after the war--during the war nobody wanted to rock the boat naturally--but after the war this thing began to heat up, and our despatches on the Moroccan nationalists' activities, their aims, their aspirations, their suppression by the

French, were viewed with great hostility by the Embassy in Paris, as you can imagine. And Ridgway Knight, who was working on North Africa in the Political Section, used to draft despatches for Caffery to sign saying that we didn't know what we were talking about. That the French in the Quai d'Orsay had assured them this, that, and the other. And that this aspect of our reporting should be more or less trivialized. I found this very patronizing.

Then early in '47 the Sultan took it into his head to come to Tangier. He had not been there for many years. He had his palace, he used to go there in the summer and spend some time. LaBonne was the French Resident General--High Commissioner--he was not a military man. He informed LaBonne that he was planning to come to Tangier and he was going to receive the diplomatic corps ceremonially and that he was going to make a speech. Well, this was a big event. We didn't know what to expect, LaBonne didn't know what to expect either. Doubtless he had written a speech for him. I'm not quite sure whether he had or not, but it would have been natural had he done so. The Sultan, however, gave his own speech, and his own speech came as a bombshell because he talked about an independent Morocco, about the riddance of the protectorate power, and moving into the era of enlightenment and that sort of thing. And the French were absolutely livid. It was enough of a time bomb for LaBonne to be summoned to Paris and dismissed from his job because he hadn't been firm enough toward the Sultan. They sent as his replacement one who would be firm--General Juin.

I left in January of '48 for an assignment in the Department. Clearly things were in a state of flux and one could see that the days of French supremacy in Morocco was coming to an end. Eventually the Sultan, Mohammed V, was exiled to Reunion, I believe.

*Q: Reunion, which they used as sort of an exile spot.*

FRITZLAN: Yes. And didn't they send Abdel Krim there too? He escaped though, he got off the boat at Port Said and the Egyptians gave him sanctuary. The Sultan wasn't so lucky, but he wasn't there very long because they got their independence in '55--perhaps he was exiled about '49-'50, he might have been there four or five years. So he came back in triumph after '55. The poor fellow didn't live very much longer.

*Q: One further question before we move away from Tangier. Did you get involved at all in consular courts?*

FRITZLAN: No, I didn't. Consular courts were rarely used in that period that I was there. The person who acted as assessor, or judge, or whatever you might call him, was Consul John Goodyear. He was the number two man in the office. We had protégés there. You know how that system worked under the capitulations. They were practically all Moroccan Jews.

*Q: That went back to the early years.*

FRITZLAN: It went back about 100 years I'd say. These chaps got their protégé status for what was called Signal Services rendered to the United States. Our rights derived from the terms of treaties we concluded with the Ottoman Empire and the Sultan of Morocco. We could appoint so many Moroccan nationals who would then be under our jurisdiction, and not the local jurisdiction--a most extraordinary state of affairs. They got this position by helping us mainly with land problems, though we didn't need land for the Legation, it had been given to us by the Sultan in 1820 or so.

*Q: They may well have because there was a scandal back in around the 1870s where George Butler, the nephew of Benjamin Butler, a political general, had sold protégé status in Egypt. I'm not sure there wasn't some hanky-panky of this going to the early era.*

FRITZLAN: I'm not positive whether they could inherit or not, but I have a feeling that somehow this passed father to son. It seemed to embrace the whole family. After the war we wanted some land on the Atlantic coast of Tangier in the International Zone for a big VOA station. Now the worst way to approach this was for us to go out and let it be known that we wanted to buy land because you know what would have happened to prices. So we used one of our protégés, a Moroccan Jewish type, to get his hands on parcels of land through various devious means, and to get options and, of course, he got paid somehow or other--plenty, you can be sure of that. And then finally a deal was struck, and then it emerged that he was doing this all for the US He rendered us services, you see.

The other case that came to my mind in the Consular Court there, was a case involving two Jewish families who were protégés. The son of one family was accused of raping the daughter of another. So Jack Goodyear had his work cut out over that. The District of Columbia law had to apply. I think in the end the young man was declared guilty of rape, and of course, you can imagine, an awful row sprang up between the families. In effect, he had to be locked up. In the old days you'd lock him up in the cellar of the office, but we didn't have the facilities so somehow or other we came to an arrangement with the local authority whereby he'd be locked up for a few months in a local jail. I don't think he was locked up for more than two or three months, and then he was out.

*Q: You left in 1948 to go to Arabic training. I take it that the Arab world and your exposure to it had beckoned you?*

FRITZLAN: Well, it beckoned, yes, especially as we were told that specialization in a field of particular interest would improve one's career opportunities. Howland Shaw was the high priest of specialization and before the war they provided in a limited way for language training in Arabic, Chinese, etc., and functional training in economics, finance, etc. But, after the war, as our world-wide responsibilities increased the Department intensified its activities in the field of specialization. So I volunteered for the Arabic program and was accepted. There were about five of us in the group.

*Q: Could you give a little flavor of who these people were?*



FRITZLAN: The other five?

Q: *Yes. What was their attitude?*

FRITZLAN: Almost all served in the Arab world. Do you want me to mention names?

Q: *Sure.*

FRITZLAN: I suppose the most senior of this, although he didn't join the group immediately but he'd been a FSO longer than the rest of us, was Harland Clark who joined us from Jeddah where he was a political officer. He'd served before in Aden. He had some knowledge of Arabic, as we all did a little bit. Another one was Rodger Davies. He came from Jeddah, so those two knew each other pretty well. Another one was Carl Walstrom. I'm hazy about where Walstrom had served--I think he'd served in Algiers, I'm not certain. Then there were Dayton Mak and David Gamon who, I believe, had had previous service in the Arab world.

I think we all, first of all, were fascinated by the Near East, especially those of us who had served there. We all regarded it as a very sensitive, strategic, part of the world of great importance to the US; oil, strategic routes, etc. We could see great turmoil and commotion with the coming into being of the state of Israel. We were all fascinated by the Arabic language, and the history of the Arabs generally. We also thought it was another way of getting ahead in the Service. One hoped to be given political work instead of routine consular work. I think on the whole the five of us prospered.

Q: *It proved out. Your first posting as an Arabist was to Amman. You were there from '49 to '52. This must have been fascinating. Could you describe what the situation was, and what you were doing?*

FRITZLAN: We recognized Jordan as an independent state in 1948 and a Legation was established in March or April of '49. Wells Stabler was the first Chargé d'Affaires. He had a staff of one American, and about three locals. I'd been to Princeton for a year pursuing my Arabic and related studies, and I arrived in August of that year to take over from him. He came to the Department. The war between the Arabs and the Jews was over the summer before and they had signed armistice agreements. The war wasn't over technically but there was an armistice so the fighting had ceased. Amman was then a small village-like place, everybody knew everybody. I immediately met King Abdullah, his ministers. I had access to any of them almost anytime. My Arabic was sufficient to carry on a normal, not technical, conversation. The King expected me to come and join him in a group that rotated, once a week for dinner; there were always two or three foreign representatives, three or four ministers; and then members of the court.

Q: *The King was reaching out then. He was not a recluse?*

FRITZLAN: Oh, certainly not, and in addition to this he liked me to appear about every ten days at his dewan for even 15 minutes just to have a chat--talk about nothing but the weather, maybe. He didn't want an interpreter because if we had an interpreter, then whatever we talked about, however trivial or insignificant, would be all over the town, and he preferred to have a few confidences away from his immediate entourage.

*Q: Was he using you to offset the British to some extent?*

FRITZLAN: That was certainly a calculation that must have been in his mind. He relied very heavily on the British, Sir Alec Kirkbride was Minister and he was really the mainstay of the throne and the government. At the beginning the British didn't like us being there. Kirkbride, of course, I called on him; he returned the call in a normal way, but he wasn't about to tell me anything. However, I did have access to the various government ministers. The Prime Minister at the time was Tawfig Abul Huda. He and I met occasionally formally and only on business. We spoke French because he didn't have any English, and my Arabic was insufficient. I remember soon after I arrived the King had been traveling in the Arab world--not to Syria--but he made some remarks about Syria. His remarks related to the idea of a Greater Syria. I was told by the Department to seek an early opportunity to meet the Prime Minister and tell him that we regarded the King's remarks on the question of Greater Syria, as unfortunate, and not helpful in a complex situation.

*Q: What did Greater Syria mean?*

FRITZLAN: It would be Syria, plus Transjordan, and in a still greater context, you could put in Lebanon, or parts of Lebanon, and he would be the ruler of Greater Syria with his capital in Damascus. Well, it was rather a ticklish assignment. So the Prime Minister listened to my best effort in French to suggest that perhaps he could help put a damper on the King's outspokenness. He listened to me in total silence, and after I'd said my piece, I got up and departed. Now interestingly enough, when we got a Minister within a year, Gerald Drew, again the King was making similar statements and all his Arab neighbors became aroused. After Drew's being there a few months, we had a visit from Burton Yost Berry, who was the Deputy Assistant Secretary for the area. Just before he arrived, we got a telegram from the Department which greatly perturbed Drew because the Department asked him to go and see the King and let him know that we were not pleased with these remarks, and that they didn't help at all. Drew didn't like the idea at all. He wasn't about to do anything. Later he was having a barbecue, quite a few people; we had our Minister in Damascus, people from Jerusalem, and Burton Berry. So Drew, standing over the barbecue, began to relate this matter to a small audience and said it would be stupid for him to carry out his instruction, unless he wanted to be moved to another post which he did not want. Burton Berry was listening, and after a bit he said quietly, "Gerry, you better do as the Department told you, or else you might be moved." That really put the fat in the fire. So Gerry had hours of soul searching, and he and I discussed it backwards and forwards, and forwards and backwards, and finally we met with Burton Berry and together we worked out a formula whereby all would be satisfied if he went to the Prime

Minister--a different man--and talked to him explaining the Department's position; and asking him to say something to the King. I have to say that, though I had some sympathy with Drew's feelings, he could have handled things better.

Alec Kirkbride, as I said a moment ago, whose previous experience had been in the British Colonial, not Foreign Service, was inclined to be very reserved toward us Americans whom he regarded, doubtless, with a touch of suspicion. Eventually, it became clear to the Department (and to us) that we were learning more about important happenings in Amman from the British Foreign Office than from our Legation. (We had, as now, an FSO who specialized in Near Eastern affairs and he, naturally had close relations with the Foreign Office.) The Department quite properly complained to the British and eventually Kirkbride became considerably more forthcoming. There had been occasions when Kirkbride would come and see me, saying that he had a message or two to relay to me, either to or from the Foreign Office, which he did. He made it clear that he was acting under instructions and I surmised that he did so grudgingly.

*Q: Trying to recapture here, how did you feel--I mean this new thing called an Arabist, and Israel was just coming, it had not reached you might say super power status within the Middle East. How did you feel towards it, and how about the other officers you were around? How did you feel about this?*

FRITZLAN: I have to say that at the beginning I was opposed to our policy of introducing a Jewish state into the area; bringing it about by force, which is what happened. We got the partition resolution through the UN Assembly in '47 by devious and, I think, unprincipled means. This is well known, this is history. One could have said, "All right, the Arabs behave badly because they were given an opportunity to come to terms. They were made offers at the time that in hindsight might seem generous. They said `no thank you.'" Why on earth anybody would suppose that the Arabs would accept terms which meant their moving out of their homes, and leaving their land, for a bunch of European Jews, I can't imagine. But this is what they were meant to do. Why? Because seemingly the world, or we anyway, thought that the Jews were just coming back. That they were coming back to their homes, although there was an interval of about 2000 years, they're still coming back to their homes. Well, this doesn't wash in my mind. And the Arabs, seen in the minds of a lot of Americans, to be nothing but a bunch of Bedouin shepherds, camel drivers, drovers.

How did I feel? Ambivalent. I was impressed in the early days of this noble experiment by the fine sounding speeches certain Jewish leaders like Abba Eban, and Ben Gurion made. I was prepared to believe that something could be worked out, some kind of a solution under which they could live side by side if not exactly in the same bit of land. Now our policy was totally weighted in favor of the Jews--I say Jews because Israel was hardly a state then. I mean having got the partition through, the war more or less out of the way--the UN passed resolutions, on the right to return of those refugees who wished to return to their homes, or something comparable. And remember, this was a case of something like a million Palestinian Arabs who were forced to leave either by implied

threats, or physical coercion. And the idea that was spread abroad by the Jews, that they were encouraged to do this by outside Arab broadcasts, Syrian, and so on, to leave because they were going to come back in triumph in no time, has been proven false. This was just Jewish propaganda. There is no record anywhere of any such broadcasts. So these people were not leaving of their own accord or because of encouragement from the outside.

*Q: There had been some really rather nasty...*

FRITZLAN: There was the case of Deir Yasin, the village where they massacred every man, woman and child, to frighten the Arabs. Of course they were frightened. Wouldn't you be frightened? But to say that they left of their own accord is pure nonsense. So we supported this resolution, those who wanted to return, should be allowed to return. Otherwise there should be compensation. We supported a resolution that, I think, if they got the Negev, which was not in the original partition plan, they should give up some land somewhere else. There were several other resolutions, but principally, this one about the right to return or compensation, and we were naive enough to believe that these Jews would carry out the terms of a resolution that we favored, that we voted for. Not at all. They had no intention of carrying it out, and although we were in a perfect position to exercise coercion over them, we totally abdicated any such responsibility.

*Q: How about the officers such as yourself and others who were intimately concerned with this? Were you sending screams of anguish?*

FRITZLAN: Of course we were. A few people came out to see things first hand, but not very many. If they did they rarely went to the refugee camps. Of course we were sending all kinds of alarm signals and stressed the awful conditions these refugees were living in. So then the Department had a brilliant idea. We would set up a UN agency after a survey group had come out, the UN agency would have as its mission--first of all the relief of the refugees, rehabilitation, but above all we were going to encourage them to settle in other Arab countries. Of course, it was doomed to failure. First of all to imagine Palestinians want to be settled in Jordan, or in Syria, or any part of Lebanon, much less Iraq, was absurd. To imagine that these countries would say, "Yes, of course we'll take them," was again absurd because this was in their mind one way essentially of solving this "iniquitous" campaign against Palestinian Arabs, and they weren't about to have that solved in that way. We were terribly frustrated because we could see the injustice, the abrogation of human rights, the one-sidedness of our policy, and we didn't like it. And, of course, we raised arguments against it; we protested, we could see all kinds of trouble being stored up ahead for us. Because we reported to the Department objectively, some people at Foggy Bottom would automatically brand a Foreign Service Arabist as being anti-semitic- just like that.

*Q: I know. This has been a canard that has been thrown out again and again. Were you ever getting any orders or instructions saying, "Stop reporting all the negative things. Face up to what amounts to domestic political realities."*

FRITZLAN: Not in those words. But we used to get policy planning drafts and be asked to comment on them. Of course, at the head of the agenda was what to do about this festering Palestinian problem. I made some proposals, the gist of which were that to get what we wanted, which was clear, and that was acceptance by Israel of UN resolutions and mandates, and in an effort to get the parties together, my proposal was simply that we cease funding unconditionally the state of Israel, and tell them that this assistance involved a two-way proposition. They cannot count on getting indefinitely unconditional help from us without taking seriously into account our regional concerns. I knew, of course, in making such a recommendation that it would likely fall on deaf ears, and that is what happened.

*Q: How about our relations with the Legation or Embassy in Tel Aviv?*

FRITZLAN: Our first Ambassador to Tel Aviv was James McDonald. He had been on the Anglo American Committee set up right after the war to look into the matter. He was a well-known, ardent Zionist, though not a Jew, who could never see anything but the Jewish and Israeli side of things, who was completely and utterly sold out. I don't say that he was literally bought, but sold out in his principles, his thinking, and everything to the benefit of the Zionist cause. So our relations with the Embassy in Tel Aviv under his stewardship were nothing, didn't exist, just pro forma. Then we had another man come out as Ambassador.

*Q: You say you had another person come out?*

FRITZLAN: Yes. We had Monnett Davis, a career man who was, of course, a totally different type of man, much more objective and all together reasonable. We had good relations under his tenure there. And then, of course, we had constant contacts with our Consulate General in Jerusalem, which was on the Arab side at the time--probably still is, a fine building on a beautiful site.

*Q: We had an Ambassador who was really from outside the Service, but supposedly Foreign Service Officers are trained to be relatively objective in observing foreigners, and all. Were you able to go sort of below the Ambassador level and talk to people to find out what was going on in Israel to your professional capacity?*

FRITZLAN: We didn't really go to Tel Aviv. They didn't come to Amman; it wasn't easy. During my three years there, I got to Tel Aviv just before we left on a two or three day visit. Yes, there was Francis Russell, and others, and occasionally we'd meet mainly in Jerusalem, but rarely if at all did they come to Amman. I don't remember any of them coming to Amman. It was pretty clear what was happening in Israel. We didn't have to have it interpreted for us. Every day something would happen which made life harder for the Palestinians.

Perhaps I'll take just a few minutes to mention a situation where very considerable hopes were raised, and suggested some kind of a settlement could be achieved. This was at the end of '49, and January of '50. The King's Minister of Court at the time was Samir Rifai, and he kept me very well briefed on what was happening. The Israelis were taking the initiative, I believe, in trying to sound out King Abdullah on various matters that they felt could be settled between them and him in relation to Jerusalem particularly. So they sent Dayan, and I think several people in the Israeli foreign office who were Arabists, to talk to the King with Samir present. They had several meetings, and it seemed as if there was a framework whereby some kind of a settlement could be achieved. It involved the question of property restitution, slight modifications in the armistice line, Israeli access to the Wailing Wall and Mount Scopus, possibly a corridor from Hebron to the sea which would give Jordan access to the Mediterranean. The King used to say he wouldn't be happy until he could bathe his feet in the Mediterranean. There were a number of relatively minor irritating points between Israel and Jordan which could have been worked out. The Israelis at this point seemed really serious about making an agreement, particularly as regards Jerusalem, that might have stood the test of time, but there were several things on which they simply refused to budge, e.g. sovereign rights over the Wailing Wall and the Jewish Quarter in the Old City. It didn't seem to me that these were insuperable obstacles, nor did it seem so to Kirkbride.

I, in reporting all this, said that I thought this was a golden opportunity for the Department to take some sort of a lead and push the Israelis forward. I had every reason to believe that the British and Kirkbride were doing much the same in respect to Abdullah. And I got a reply back saying in effect that "the Department doesn't wish to get involved in this matter. It is one to be settled strictly between the two parties." Can you imagine anything more negative? And so, nothing came of it. I don't know if Abdullah could have signed any kind of comprehensive settlement of Ben Gurion that would have stood the test of time but there was a possibility. The net result of these talks was that a year or so later Abdullah was assassinated by a Palestinian acting under Egyptian influence. He might have signed something and still been assassinated, but it might have held up just as the treaty between Egypt and Israel held up despite Sadat's assassination.

But here again these were the frustrations from which one suffered in trying to work out something constructive in the field.

*Q: How were your relations with the equivalent to the Near Eastern desk bureau?*

FRITZLAN: I must say that Stuart Rockwell, who was the desk officer then, tended to see things much more in the Israeli light than the Arab light. He had never served in the Arab world.

*Q: He was in Morocco, but maybe later on.*

FRITZLAN: He was in Morocco later, much later. I think Stuart was playing his cards very carefully, and you could say that of most of those in the NEA area. It was easier for

someone in the field to take a position such as I took than for someone in the Department who would be well aware of the risk of being labeled an Arabist which was almost the kiss of death. I do think though, without offending the Jewish community in this country, the Department could have taken measures to let them know we favored these negotiations, and could they use their influence on Ben Gurion, and we were going to do the same. I don't think it would have seemed offensive. I don't think at that point the Jewish feeling was so engaged on the question of "how far can we go in this settlement?"

*Q: The Jewish lobby really wasn't that powerful until some years later. Were you there during the assassination of Abdullah?*

FRITZLAN: Yes, I was. I saw him the day before he was assassinated.

*Q: What happened, and what effect did it have on what you were doing?*

FRITZLAN: It was terrible, it upset everything because even though these peace negotiations--or let's call them that--these negotiations failed. But Abdullah made it clear that he hadn't given up, that he was going to return to the charge, and the assassination occurred about a year after the negotiations were broken off. He was, of course, handicapped, I will say this, in having some Palestinian ministers who didn't like it. They would have said, "We accept nothing short of return to our homes in areas occupied by the Jews." So this was a handicap. I don't know in the long run whether they could have prevailed. Supposing they'd resigned? Okay, he could have got in some other Palestinians who would have done his bidding, I think. However, everything was spoiled by the assassination. Abdullah was succeeded by Talal, the Crown Prince, who was useless, a schizophrenic. The assassination, of course, did mean that any successor of Abdullah's was vulnerable. He would have to be very careful about exposing himself in the way the old King did.

*Q: There were a series of assassinations, not of the King, but of others.*

FRITZLAN: There was the case of the former Lebanese Prime Minister, Riad al-Solh. This was a purely Lebanese feud, nothing to do really with Israel. Yes, there were assassinations. There had been attempts on Abdullah long before this over the years. Talal was deposed as incompetent in 1952 and his son Hussein came to the throne. Over the years there were attempts to assassinate him. They may have been instigated by Nasser, but still...

*Q: You were still there when Abdullah was assassinated?*

FRITZLAN: Yes, in July of '51. I didn't leave until the end of '52.

*Q: Did things just stop really in a way?*

FRITZLAN: Pretty well, things just stopped, and there was no progress. After he was assassinated Talal, who was in Switzerland undergoing treatment for schizophrenia, came back eventually. But briefly there was a regency, then he came back and showed himself to be totally unbalanced. And this went on for about a year; a totally unstable situation. And then they declared that he was unfit to rule. The constitution provided for this, so he was deposed. His son, Hussein, was still at Harrow--or was it Sandhurst? I think he'd left Harrow and he'd gone to Sandhurst for about six months. So he was left there and in the interim there was a regency council. Hussein came back in September of '52 and, although only 17, they declared that he was 18 under the terms of the lunar calendar which made him eligible to assume the throne, which he did. I left about two months later.

*Q: The demise of Abdullah, any real working with the government was just put on hold.*

FRITZLAN: There was no government virtually. There was a kind of caretaking government without any direction really. By this time Kirkbride had left. He'd been gone a year, and a new British Ambassador, Furlonge, was there, and he couldn't possibly step into Kirkbride's shoes. Glubb was still there. Glubb was the one stabilizing force.

*Q: He was head of the Arab Legion.*

FRITZLAN: Yes. As long as Glubb was there, you felt, "it's okay." But nothing could happen in a forward direction.

*Q: At that point was there any threat to Israel, or from Israel?*

FRITZLAN: The only threats were night time raiding parties, from the Arab side. Dispossessed farmers used to go and collect their oranges, or something. I don't recall that there were any serious violent attacks. It's extraordinary how relatively peaceful that armistice line border was. The Jews would retaliate by coming over and blowing up something or other and then they'd go back. There was one potentially serious confrontation to the south in the Wadi Araba about '51 or so, when Israeli armored vehicles were maneuvering and were getting on to the Jordanian side of the line. This was all desert. I don't know why they'd want to do that except maybe as a provocation. So the Arab Legion sent in some armored vehicles under British officers, of course. They were opposing each other and things got to a pretty touchy point where any little incident could have produced an explosion. Eventually nothing happened and the Israelis withdrew. But that was the kind of thing that happened, nothing more than that. There were never any aerial excursions, violations of air space, that I knew of.

There was a rather amusing little incident in '50--the spring of '50. There was a regional meeting in Cairo under Caffery's direction...

*Q: American Ambassador, Jefferson Caffery.*



FRITZLAN: So I went down representing Amman, and how did I go? There were four little Rapides, they were called, single propellered planes that would take about four passengers-- and these flew two or three times a week to Beirut and back, and two or three times a week to Cairo and back. And how did they fly to Cairo? Right over southern Israel without permission or anything. That's how I went and came. Shortly after that one of these planes was intercepted by an Israeli air force plane, taken to some air field, forced to land and impounded. In this way travel between Amman and Cairo became possible only via Beirut.

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*Q: Today is June 15, 1990, the Ides of June. This is the second interview with Consul General A. David Fritzlan. We had left it in our last interview where you had just left Jordan so we're coming to the 1953-55 period in the Department of State. Could you explain what you were doing then, please?*

FRITZLAN: First I should say that when I left Jordan in November '52, I spent two months at the UN General Assembly as an adviser on Middle East Affairs, and then began my duties in the Department in January of '53.

*Q: Anything in particular that struck you at the UN?*

FRITZLAN: I'd been on the delegation before to the previous UN Assembly at Paris in 1951-52. What struck me then very forcefully was at that time, the earlier one, the almost total commitment we made to Israel in relation to the disputes between Israel and the Palestinians and the Arab states. And this same total commitment was evident in '52.

*Q: So we're still talking about the Truman administration.*

FRITZLAN: This was the first Assembly in New York, the headquarters had moved from Paris to the new location in New York in '52. It was the same total commitment. This was still the Truman administration, and this was very frustrating for a person like myself who had been trained as an Arabist, who had spent a number of years in Arab countries, who had seen the problem of Palestine and Israel first hand from the vantage point of Amman. Well, I'm not going to go back over that, but I took up my duties in January of '53 as officer in charge of Iraq and Arabian Peninsula Affairs.

*Q: When you talk about Arabian Peninsula Affairs what...*

FRITZLAN: The Arabian peninsula embraces Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Kuwait and the Trucial coast Emirates. The latter were still under British protection, so that as far as the Arabian peninsula was concerned, my duties were at least 90 per cent related to Saudi Arabia. Now, shortly before that time, a few months earlier, a very troublesome event occurred. That is to say the Saudis...we had every reason to believe in the Department, possibly egged on by ARAMCO, the American-Arabian oil company in Dhahran, moved

a sizeable force into an oasis called Buraymi which had for many years been a small area in dispute between Saudi Arabia and one or more of the Trucial States.

*Q: Particularly Abu Dhabi.*

FRITZLAN: Yes, it was Abu Dhabi and Dubai. The people who lived in this oasis belonged to a curious Moslem sect. They were not Wahhabis, the dominant sect in Saudi Arabia.

*Q: Particularly in the eastern province area.*

FRITZLAN: Though never stated as such, the obvious reason for this incursion was the possibility that oil reserves might be found there. As I say, this area had been in dispute for many years, a century or more, in the distant past it had been briefly under Wahhabi domination. But it had changed hands frequently, and we regarded this as a serious breach really to the stability of the area--this incursion by Saudi Arabia. What happened was, the British acting as protectors of these Trucial States, who objected strenuously to the Saudi presence, sent a small force in, which, of course, was very easily able to kick out the Saudis, and they more or less occupied it.

*Q: Probably the Trucial Oman Scouts.*

FRITZLAN: Yes. Well, this was my initiation as a desk officer in the Department. We were in the middle of this dispute. Arrayed against us were Saudi Arabia and ARAMCO on one side; and on the other side the British; and we were squeezed very badly by these two opposing forces.

*Q: I might add there was also British oil interests involved in this too probably.*

FRITZLAN: There probably were, yes, of course. Oil is the name of the game in that area. But then how do you go about asserting a territorial claim? Do you move a force in, or do you not? Now there are people in the Department inclined to take a view that Saudi Arabia was our great and dear friend, and ARAMCO was an American company of vital interest to us. And the British were well known for their imperialism in the past, and this was another manifestation of imperialism. We should, therefore, take a position pretty much with the Saudi government and ARAMCO. I simply refused to accept that. I didn't believe that just because ARAMCO is an American company and they might find oil there, that we had to give them our support in this matter. Nor did I feel that we had to be totally supportive of the British. I felt we should adopt a neutral stance and urge the parties to talk, which is what they did not want to do.

Incidentally, in this respect, I did a lot of research about the relative merits of the various countries in that area as to sovereignty over Buraymi, this oasis that hardly anyone had ever heard of. Anyway, there was a certain amount of literature on the general area in the State Department library, and I chanced upon a book written some years earlier by the

ARAMCO chief political adviser, who was also an historian. I can't think of his name, but I will remember it.

*Q: We can always insert it.*

FRITZLAN: ...who had written a book specifically about the Trucial States, and the areas such as Buraymi which might have been in dispute and he went into the Buraymi oasis question in great depth. The net conclusion that he came to was, that of all the claimants the Saudi claim was probably the weakest. Well, when I made an allusion to this very scholarly work to the chief ARAMCO representative here, Terry Duce, he practically hit the ceiling. In other words he wondered how on earth I got a hold of a copy of this book. I said, "Well, it's in the library." He was nonplused. He didn't know quite how to deal with that. Now, later on the British representative from the British Embassy who was dealing with the subject, came to me and said, he understood that I'd found a book put out by ARAMCO which dealt with Buraymi. I didn't know where he got this from. Perhaps we'd sent a message to the London Embassy which was heavily involved and mentioned this, and then the Embassy passed it on to the Foreign Office, and they passed it on to their Embassy here. Ronald Bailey asked if he could borrow the book; and I said, "I'm afraid not." I didn't want to be accused of helping them make their case. I said, "Look, the book is available. I'm sure you can get it at the Library of Congress. Why don't you go there for it?" I don't know what he did.

This, as you can imagine, made me spend many hours of thought on how we could get this thing settled. Eventually, after about a year or more, we got the parties to agree to arbitration. And the result of the arbitration, I believe, went against the Saudis although I had no reason to believe the dispute had been solved. I, by that time, had left the Department for the Army War College in August 1955.

*Q: I might add that I was in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia from 1958 to '60 and relations between Saudi Arabia and Great Britain had still been severed over the Buraymi issue. So it had not yet been settled.*

FRITZLAN: It soured their relations for a long time. The British had had a very good relationship with King Ibn Saud, but this was something that he took very much to heart.

*Q: And this was under King Saud, his son, who followed through.*

FRITZLAN: I am referring to the old King Ibn Saud, the father of the dynasty. In early 1953 Prince Faisal, one of the sons of King Saud and Foreign Minister, was in Washington having come specifically to meet the new President and Secretary of State, to discuss the Buraymi matter. I took him up to meet Mr. Dulles. Faisal had an interpreter--a very good one, I could never fulfill the job that he did--but I was there as a recorder of this meeting which lasted about an hour. The Secretary thought he could get Faisal in and out in about 20 minutes. After about 20 minutes of his discussion of the Buraymi issue, and how it was our duty to come to their aid, Prince Faisal detected an air of some

uneasiness, if not irritation on the part of the Secretary. So he looked at him, and he looked at me, and looked at Mr. Dulles and said, "Oh, Mr. Secretary, have I come on the wrong day at the wrong time?" "Oh, no, no, Your Highness, it's perfectly all right. Go right ahead." So then he talked for another half hour by which time Dulles had just about had it. But we hadn't finished the meeting yet, because as he got up to leave Prince Faisal said, "May I ask one of my attendants to come in?" Dulles said, "Yes." So the attendant came in carrying a couple of cases--white cowhide cases, with the Saudi royal arms stamped on them in gold--he opened up one, it was a sword case, a beautiful sword with a bejewelled hilt and all that sort of thing. It was presented to the Secretary as a gift from His Majesty. The Secretary, of course, was absolutely overwhelmed.

Anyway, that wasn't all. He opened another case from which he took out some Arab robes, one set for the Secretary and corresponding robes for the Secretary's wife. And a little case was opened revealing a beautiful string of pearls for Mrs. Dulles. All that took another half hour. So we were up there I suppose for getting on to two hours. It just about ruined his day, but on the other hand he had nice presents. So, from the Secretary's office, with a brief interval, we traveled, with the Secretary in another car, myself with Prince Faisal, to the White House where President Eisenhower received him graciously and the usual interpreter was present. Faisal made his pitch on Buraymi, not in such detail, but considerable detail. Eisenhower, in reply, made absolutely no reference to the dispute. He only said we very much appreciated the fine relations we had with Saudi Arabia and His Majesty King Ibn Saud. This lasted about 20 minutes at the end of which the usual elaborate presents were given. Eventually I was called by some art dealer who was asked to come in to the White House to look at these precious things, and tell the President exactly what was what. So I was summoned to the White House, to go up to the private chambers where all these things were laid out, and asked to identify them, and say something--"these are Persian Gulf pearls, not cultured pearls, you can be sure of that. This is an abaya and this is something else."

Now I haven't said anything about Yemen, but it occupied very little of my time. We had a few problems. It always amazed me that this poor country was so fiercely proud of its independence, that they were happy to have a relationship with us based merely on exchanges of views about the world, or perhaps the Middle East in particular. They never once asked us for technical assistance or grant aid, whereas the Saudis who had millions coming from their oil exports, were constantly asking us for large sums of money for God knows what. It amazed me, the difference.

I don't really have much to say about Kuwait except that it was at the beginning of its oil development. Oil had been discovered in Kuwait before World War II but it had been put on hold because the war intervened, and then after the war they began to look further into it, and the more they looked, the more oil they found. They found there was so much oil they didn't know what to do with it. The great problem was how to get some water. So what they had to do was build a distillation plant. At that time the British were very active in Kuwait. They had sort of taken over the planning. My other responsibilities...

*Q: Before we move to that, I would like to ask on the Buraymi dispute...now Henry Byroade was the Assistant Secretary, and there were other people. Were you getting any pressures on this? Or was this, to get a spirit of the times, kind of left for you to work on?*

FRITZLAN: I tell you, there were pressures all right. I have to say that the office director, Pete Hart, who had just come from Dhahran where he'd been Consul General, took a considerably more pro-Saudi, pro-ARAMCO view than I was inclined to take.

*Q: I am sure he had been--I won't say brainwashed--but having served there later one certainly gets the Saudi point of view.*

FRITZLAN: I was not surprised at that. Now, of course, I did have this to confront. I was told when I got to the Department that I had a reputation--Pete Hart told me this--a reputation for being excessively pro-British. I said, "I don't understand how that reputation arose. I know that I had three years in Amman which had been mainly under British influence, I wouldn't say control, but certainly Abdullah could not have survived without the Arab Legion which was a British raised and supported force, and without a British subsidy. It made for stability in the region, and if I was pro-British to the degree that I thought that a good idea, well then I was pro-British. But I never considered myself an Anglophile. I considered myself pure and simply an American who found it desirable in many instances to support the British and, on the other hand, to receive British support in other parts of the world." But I had still to consider that there were people, like Pete and others, who thought that I was excessively pro-British.

The fortunate thing is that Byroade was quite open minded on Buraymi, and even more so, and more active in the matter, was Jack Jernegan, the Deputy Assistant Secretary.

*Q: So these would have been above Pete Hart, and Pete Hart was above you?*

FRITZLAN: Yes. I found that the greatest help for me, support for me, in dealing with the Buraymi matter came from Jack Jernegan. So on the whole it was he who made the final decision. He was very open minded and took, almost invariably, my recommendation. I won't say that Pete Hart didn't, but I think he was less inclined to.

*Q: So the basic outcome as you saw this was that the Buraymi situation was eventually settled by a compromise, rather than our exerting all our pressure to make this a matter of...*

FRITZLAN: We compromised in this respect, that we were striving to get the parties to go to arbitration which neither of them wanted to do. And they didn't want to talk to each other either, so how is one to come to an arrangement on this? Eventually they did meet in arbitration and that marked a success of our endeavors, which had taken more than a year. I left happily in August of '55 to go to the Army War College at Carlisle Barracks and was relieved of the Buraymi affair.

But I haven't said anything about Iraq. So let me say this. While Buraymi occupied the greatest part of my efforts in that first year, my time and attention, Iraq was becoming more and more important in our view. I should say that Iraq was still under British influence to a large extent. They were about to amend their treaty of alliance with Britain, and did achieve that. Under the new arrangement the British moved out of Habbaniyah, the big air base to the west of Baghdad, and the Iraqi forces moved in. This marked a very considerable step towards their full independence. Now sometime late in '53, or early '54, despite high hopes initially, we failed in our efforts to achieve what we called the Middle East Defense Organization largely because Egypt under Nasser fiercely opposed it. This organization was meant to bolster those countries in the Middle East that were opposed to communist expansion, and most of them were--all of them really--even Egypt, although Egypt preferred to adopt a neutral stance. Communist expansion was a serious threat in the northern reaches of the Middle East. Turkey was under pressure as was Iran. And so Mr. Dulles--when Pakistan and Turkey made a treaty of mutual assistance--conceived the idea of what he called the Northern Tier Defense Arrangement, which would embrace Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Pakistan, and hopefully Egypt would come into it. A lot of our efforts were exerted on behalf of getting Egypt into such an arrangement. We had little trouble over Iraq, but they were very timid about being the only Arab country to join. We thought Jordan might come in but that was a matter that didn't loom large, or important in the scheme of things. As it turned out in the end Jordan promised to come in and then had to reverse itself because of the popular resentment against it. In the meantime Nasser had made no secret of his total opposition. We didn't get anywhere in trying to influence him. We had to coax Iraq to come in. To get Iraq to come in we made a military agreement with them whereby we supplied them considerable advanced weaponry that they needed for defense, on very favorable terms. This was a kind of lever, you might say, but at the same time it put the government of Iraq into an unenviable position in relation to the other Arab countries and its own populace who were coming more and more under the spell of Nasser's Pan-Arab nationalism. Finally, however, Iraq bit the bullet. The Baghdad Pact was signed in Baghdad. This was the Northern Tier Agreement.

*Q: This since was known as CENTO.*

FRITZLAN: It later became known as the Central Treaty Organization. After the revolution in Iraq in 1958 the Baghdad Pact organization became defunct. Indeed one could say that by '59 or '60 when CENTO was formed, the threat from the north had considerably diminished.

*Q: The threat from the north, we are talking about the Soviet Union.*

FRITZLAN: Yes. My attention in regard to Iraq was also focused on their own economic development plan in which we were very interested. The British and we had technical members, experts in economic development, especially land reclamation, irrigation, and so on, on what was called the Iraq Development Board. We each had a member with full voting rights. We had a large technical assistance program covering the fields of irrigation, roads, drainage, education, and public health. With our technical aid using

Iraq's vast oil wealth, dams were being built on the upper reaches of the Tigris. It was a matter of time, we thought, when the benefits would accrue to the general populace, improving their standard of living and gaining greater acceptance for the government. I mean the land would be reclaimed, land would be parceled out, there would be irrigation, cash crops, etc. Mesopotamia in the distant past had produced enormous quantities of wheat, it could do so again. So you can understand how greatly this subject engaged my attention. I must admit as between Iraq and the Arabian peninsula I found it much more congenial to work on Iraqi affairs than the latter.

We knew that we were, so to speak, racing against time in regard to Iraq. We knew about the nationalistic pressures in that part of the world; the intelligentsia were rising up and demanding more and more recognition of what they called Arab rights, freedom from western influence, and what they called imperialism. And the focus of their anger against the west was, not surprisingly, Israel. This was felt right throughout the Arab world. I suppose among all the Arabs there were few who were more ferocious, and angry on this subject than the Iraqis. So we had to contend with that.

I say we were racing against time. We hoped that the lid could be kept on a kind of simmering kettle long enough so that the benefits from the development program that had already begun, and was making considerable progress, would be spread throughout the population to the extent that people would accept their government as legitimate and reasonably benevolent. Unfortunately we were disappointed, but that's another story.

*Q: At the time, I mean you were concerned because at this time one could term Nasserism, or something, which was nationalism was obviously of great concern. Was there a problem, or consideration, about this Northern Tier Alliance? In other words, we were going through this phase of trying to get everybody into an alliance, but you know alliances are two-edged things. It can get people, particularly a country such as Iraq, rather annoyed. Here we were the principal supporter of Israel and yet we were sort of pushing very hard to get them into this alliance. Was this a concern that was being expressed to Dulles, and the policy makers, that this was maybe not a very good idea?*

FRITZLAN: Israel didn't like the Northern Tier, the Baghdad Pact. The ironical thing is that we, who were the prime movers to get this Northern Tier and Baghdad Pact organized and functioning, refused to join it. Dulles said no, and why; partly because Israel didn't like it, but mainly because Egypt didn't like it, and he kept expressing the idea that we should keep open our lines of communication with Nasser, and that we could in the long run deal with Nasser and work on him to promote our interests; and that if we joined formally, we lost this possibility. But to keep lines to Nasser open we weren't about to backtrack entirely on the Baghdad Pact. So what did we do? We became "observers." As I say, it's curious because Dulles was so adamant, and so strongly in favor of this, but he wouldn't join formally. As observers though, we were just as active, and influential, as if we'd been full members. We put in a lot of money, we had a technical staff and donated administrative staff to the Baghdad Pact organization. We took part in all the military exercises involved, and we concluded various agreements on

communications and such technical matters. So that as far as the efficiency of the Pact was concerned it was not in any way diminished by our non-membership. But somehow it made us look hypocritical.

*Q: You were looking at this thing. How did you feel about the Pact? I mean one could look at it two ways: one, it could be, by getting Iraq into it could be destabilizing to the social situation; or two, it could give a needed shot in the arm to the Iraqi military which would help stabilize it. I'm talking about how you were looking at this.*

FRITZLAN: I must say that I thought originally the Pact idea was a good thing. I didn't approve of our non- membership. I would have liked us to become full members. I had little faith in our being able to work on Nasser in any way. I didn't trust him, and I thought we were too beholden to what we considered his sensitivity on this matter. By doing what we did, to a large extent, we contributed to a division of the Arab world. But the division was already there. Iraq and Egypt had historically been at odds with each other.

*Q: That's the old Baghdad-Cairo...*

FRITZLAN: There has never been any love lost between those two centers of power, and both had been striving for leadership of the Arab world. This was a time when Iraq was prepared to play with us, prepared to act with us in our common interest. Why not take advantage of the opportunity? Naturally enough, it generated problems after the Suez affair, especially-- which came later, of course. But it generated serious problems because we could see there was a rising tide of young intellectuals who did not like this sort of thing, formal agreements with the west, etc. They wanted a kind of neutralism that Nehru and Tito had espoused.

*Q: This is the non-aligned group.*

FRITZLAN: So, I can say this, that while I favored the Baghdad Pact, and did what I could to promote its implementation and success, I did so knowing full well that it created problems too for us.

*Q: Before we leave this to your next assignment, you now were a desk officer dealing with the Arab world in the Eisenhower administration, and you had talked about the Truman administration and how it was wholeheartedly supporting Israel. Did you have a feel that the Eisenhower administration looked at Israel in a different way in dealing with the Arab world?*

FRITZLAN: When the Eisenhower administration came in, Eisenhower and Dulles in particular, made little secret of the fact that they were not bound by the previous administration's policy towards Israel. They were not unfriendly, not intending to be unfriendly with Israel, but they also regarded it very important that we have good relations with the Arab countries. It was their intention to look very closely at every aspect of our relations with Israel and endeavor to be as even-handed as possible. This



was the very expression that was used by Byroade often. "We intend to be, and we try to be, even-handed." And I think that that even-handedness was very largely carried out in practice, and to me it was a refreshing change from the uncritical total support that we had been providing Israel during the Truman administration.

*Q: Then you went to the War College. You had a brief stint back on the desk before going to Baghdad as Deputy Chief of Mission.*

FRITZLAN: Yes, in October of '56. I got to Baghdad a week after the Suez attack. It was really a hot time.

*Q: Could you talk about: one, what was the situation? You were in Baghdad from 1956 to '59, most of the time with Waldemar Gallman?*

FRITZLAN: Gallman was Ambassador.

*Q: And you were his deputy?*

FRITZLAN: Yes, I arrived in October just after Suez when things were in a very fluid state. Nuri Said, who was Prime Minister, felt extremely let down by the British who hadn't taken him into their counsels, and who had in effect bungled the whole thing. He said, "If you're going to do this sort of thing, do it quickly and successfully, or else don't do it." He felt that he was inevitably more vulnerable to the criticisms that he was not a good Arab nationalist. He was really in a very shaky position.

*Q: The British, and French, and Israelis had not consulted the United States wither, and this was very apparent. So in a way were we sort of at one with the Iraqis when you were there by saying, "Well they did it to us too," or something like that?*

FRITZLAN: Well, yes, we could say that. This in a sense did align us more closely than previously. What happened was, the Eisenhower doctrine was involved. That was what you might call one of the principal outcomes of the Suez affair as far as we were concerned because we had to do something to help retrieve the position of Nuri Said, stop the rot. So the Richards mission was sent out. Congressman Richards was asked to head this mission to go to the Arab countries to find if we could agree on ways and means to strengthen their economy, and their defenses, against any manifestation of communist aggression. There was also at this point, I should say, considerable turmoil in Lebanon where there was mounting Moslem opposition to President Chamoun--a Christian. Much of this was instigated by Nasser, of course. So we wanted to help him, and this was part of the plan. Any country that appeals to us for assistance against the threat of communism would receive our assistance.

*Q: When you say "against the threat of communism" were we in some way equating the nationalism that was spreading out, Nasserism or something, with communism or not in our thinking?*

FRITZLAN: Only by what we learned from experience. It is true that in these countries-- in Syria and Iraq--there were communist agents, and there were members in high places in government, especially Syria, who were known to be left in their attitudes. This was a convenient cover, though, to deal with insurrection in a sense as happened in Lebanon later when we sent in the Marines, when Chamoun felt he was under extreme pressure from left-wing forces. We used this Eisenhower Doctrine to send in the Marines, as you remember. That was in '58.

*Q: In July of '58, just after the Iraqi revolution. What was your impression of Nuri Said, and also King Faisal?*

FRITZLAN: Let's start with the King. He was a young man, then about 22, who had been educated mainly in England and had had an English governess. He was the son of Ghazi, son of Faisal I, who had been killed as a young man in an automobile accident in 1940, I believe. So that the young King came to the throne as a very small child. His uncle, Abdulillah, Ghazi's younger brother, was Regent for many years--15 maybe, until the young man achieved his majority. Then the Regent became Crown Prince, but he was always a power behind the throne. The King had little interest in government, and little knowledge of or experience in statecraft. His uncle did, and his uncle was the one really who made important decisions where the palace was involved. Nuri Said had been Prime Minister off and on since the 1920s in Iraq. He fought with the British against the Turks in Mesopotamia in World War I. A reliable man, pro-west, a nationalist, but in the sense that he didn't want to be ruled by any outside power. But a patriot in the sense that he knew the limitations of his country, and wanted the best possible expert advice, and such military and economic assistance, as the country needed. He got all that from the British until just a few years earlier when we moved in with our military assistance program, and our technical assistance program. A very shrewd man, a pretty ruthless man, simply never stood on ceremony.

Soon after I arrived, Gallman, the Ambassador, came back for home leave and selection board duty. He was gone a number of months, and I was in charge. Well, one day--Nuri, who had a very fertile imagination, and a very lively mind--I got a call from his office saying, "The Prime Minister is on his way to your embassy to discuss a matter with you." I had never in my life supposed a Prime Minister called on Chargés, or indeed, even Ambassadors--it was the other way around. Anyway he came, and we sat in the office and had a half an hour's chat about some problem that was worrying him. Most of the problems worrying him dealt with Syria, their plans to do something to the Euphrates, for example. He had, as I say, a very quick mind, he quickly got to the root of the problem, his intelligence service was considered to be extremely efficient. The problem, I suppose, in dealing with Nuri was that we were dealing with a man who was hated by the Intelligentsia, the youth, and the professional classes who were strong Arab nationalists. They hated him for his commitment to the west, his dependence as they saw it on the west. That in a nutshell is Nuri. A victim of the revolution, as of course, were the King, the Crown Prince, and others. It is ironic that he had been 40 years earlier the Iraqi leader

in the struggle, with the British, against the Turks and became the chief architect of Iraqi nationhood.

*Q: Before we get to that, what were American interests when you arrived, as you saw it, and the Ambassador saw it, in Iraq?*

FRITZLAN: Our interests were basically to keep Iraq in the Baghdad Pact. To help Iraq strengthen its defense forces. To help Iraq in any way we could in its development program. That in a nutshell was our policy and interest in regard to Iraq.

*Q: Again, obviously this is an unclassified interview, but in events leading up to the July 14, 1958 revolution, how well were you served by our intelligence service, not only the CIA, but the military?*

FRITZLAN: Not at all well, not at all well. We had a large military attaché establishment. We had one great building which was devoted to the military. An Army Attaché was a colonel with many years experience. A Naval Attaché, a Marine colonel with a large staff, an Air Attaché with an even bigger staff. They entertained frequently, they even went so far as to join the local hunt. Now the Regent who, seemingly, liked to think of himself as an English country gentleman, if you like, who spent months in England at a time, and was fond of chasing the fox. Well, he brought into being in Baghdad the local Baghdad Hunt which consisted of chaps, mostly Army, on horseback chasing jackals, there were no foxes. And so these service attachés had to get themselves all decked out in proper hunting clothes, and get a horse. Some of them had to begin to learn how to ride. And then they'd go out and join the Iraqi officers, and the Regent if he were there--he wasn't riding in those days. This was one way, they said, that we can deal on a social basis with these army colonels, and brigadiers, and the rest of them. They entertained otherwise very lavishly. And they went on army maneuvers with them. Yet when the two brigadiers who staged the revolution, the coup in July 1958, and brought their brigades through Baghdad to take over the city before Nuri could send any troops to the Syrian border which he was on the point of doing and thereby precipitating a coup, when these two brigadiers, Qasim and Aref and their colleague were identified as the persons being the masterminds behind the coup, none of our attachés knew anything about them. I felt that this was a sad failure. Neither did the CIA know anything about them. There was no warning. The only thing you could say was this: when it happened, it didn't come as a total surprise because we had a feeling that there was some kind of ferment going on. It was reflected in meetings here and there, lawyers and doctors, and student groups. You had a feeling that all was not well. But to say that we had any kind of advance information on this, would be wrong.

*Q: Ambassador Gallman. I wonder if you could explain how he operated, and how he worked in the Iraqi milieu? And how he used you, also.*

FRITZLAN: Gallman was a bit like a fish out of water. He'd never been anywhere near this part of the world in his many years of service. He'd always been, apart from one tour

as Ambassador to South Africa, he'd been identified with working with European affairs. He had no experience to serve him. That's why I suppose I was sent there because I had served in Iraq, had also trained as an Arabist. I knew something about the problems having been on the desk in Washington. I had a reasonably good relationship with him. He was not a very approachable man. He was pretty distant. Even after the dependents had been evacuated, after the revolution in '58, I stayed on for another year, he stayed on for another five months or so. Even in this period of five months he was in the Embassy, and I was in the compound in another building, I don't remember him ever saying, "Drop around this evening for a chat, and have a drink." He wasn't that sort of man. He never really acquired a feel for the problem. What motivated him, I think, as much as anything, he had a great admiration for Nuri as we all did, but what motivated him more than anything in my view was an intense dislike of the British Ambassador there, Sir Michael Wright. Now Gallman had served in London as DCM during the latter part of the war, and among his contacts at the Foreign Office was Michael Wright. He somehow or other gained a dislike for the man then and there, and that was years before he became Ambassador to Baghdad and he found Michael Wright presiding over the British Embassy. They never hit it off. It was all quite apparent, and it was a pity. I was sort of in the middle of this thing. I felt that we could not afford to be seen as pulling in the opposite direction against the British. I had good relations with him, and his DCM. But I have to say that Wright did little to make relations between our two embassies more happy, harmonious...

*Q: Two difficult men.*

FRITZLAN: Two difficult men, you're right. I mean Michael Wright could be difficult too, sure. In fact in his own embassy they thought he was a terrible man to get on with. I respected Gallman, his professionalism, but I felt the man had a number of serious weaknesses, and that's the size of it.

*Q: Can you tell from your point of view what happened during the revolution? We've already laid the groundwork.*

FRITZLAN: This was July 14, 1958. The first thing that we set about to do was to get our dependents, and all American citizens that we could urge, to get out.

*Q: How did you hear about the revolution?*

FRITZLAN: I had a call from our CIA chap, it was pretty early, about 5:00. He lived on the river, on the northern bank of the river, and opposite him more or less was Nuri Said's house, also on the river. And, as a lot of people did, he slept on the roof to get the breezes--you put yourself in a cage in wire netting with your bed there, you're up early, of course, with the sun. This was even before the sun, I suppose. He said, "Something is happening in the region of Nuri Said's house. I see puffs of smoke, and I hear gunfire." I said, "This is very serious. Come to the office right away. I'll be there as quickly as I can get there. And get one of your staff to cross over the bridge and see if he can get

anywhere near enough to see what the hell is happening." He sent one of his staff, a chap called Wolf over. He got close enough to get a bullet in the radiator of his car. So that was that.

I turned on the radio, and what I heard was long lists of names of people who had been newly put into responsible jobs like the Governor of Baghdad, the Governor of this province, Mutassarif they call them, that province or the other, the Chief of Police had been replaced, he was now so and so. A list of new Ministers was given, and so forth. And although the word 'revolution' thawra, hadn't been pronounced, I knew there was a thawra.

*Q: How do you spell...*

FRITZLAN: T-h-a-w-r-a. I got to the office as hasty as I could, the rest of our staff came along in due course. We had, curiously, one of the Ministers who lived by the Embassy compound who had the news, and fearful for his life, came and took sanctuary in our Embassy. He said, "Can I stay here? Can I come for the time being?" I said, "Yes, we can't turn you out." So he stayed there for two or three days. In a sense it was very useful because he listened to the radio, and he interpreted, and explained things to us that we had no way otherwise of appreciating, and he wrote situation papers. He was very helpful to us.

After several days of this, he became rather nervous, and we also became rather nervous, because obviously they were on the lookout for him. All the Ministers had been arrested. So I said to him, "Look, we don't want to be hard on you and turn you out just like that." There was a guard on the gate, we had tanks around our Embassy with their barrels pointed at the Embassy. They were there to protect us, and all the gates had guards, and no one could come or leave without scrutiny. I said, "We don't want to put you out just like that, but we've got to devise some way whereby you can get out because the longer you're here, the harder it will be for you in the end." He said, "I appreciate that, also I don't want to embarrass you." And I said, "That is a factor too. You do drive a car, I suppose?" He said, "Yes." I said, "All right. I've got an idea. I hope it will work." We had local native drivers. I said, "I'll get the uniform of one of our drivers, you put it on, get behind the wheel of an Embassy car, the Administrative Officer will be in the back. Take the car wherever you want, and he will drive it back." It worked. It didn't work in the long run because they did pick him up. But he was not one of those who was harshly treated, some, of course, were hanged-- tried and hanged. Terrible, and some were our good friends.

Then we had this case of three Americans in the newly opened hotel which was a quite splendid hotel. The Americans in the hotel, say a group of 20, some of them tourists, some of them business people, an archaeologist or two. Anyway, a major came into the hotel in the middle of the morning and said, "I want all the Americans to come into this room," a public room downstairs. After they assembled he looked around, he picked three

men and said, "You three come with me." And they took them away, and they've never been seen or heard of since.

Our immediate problem was to get the American dependents out and the Embassy staff cut to the limit...

*Q: Was the Ambassador there at the time?*

FRITZLAN: Yes, he was. We weren't about to remove all of our technical assistance people until it became clear that this program was finished. We didn't want it to appear that we had pulled out and left and give them an excuse to criticize us. We kept a skeleton technical assistance staff, a skeleton Embassy staff, the rest were sent packing, and all of our dependents were put on planes. Several hundreds. We had plane load after plane load go--this took negotiation, of course. They went to Rome where they were based until it was safe to return which was not really for the better part of another year, and even then it wasn't all that safe. This evacuation of dependents, and non-essential staff, was made very complicated by the fact that on the day after the revolution or something like that, our Marines landed in Lebanon. So, naturally, the Iraqis got more and more nervous and suspicious. They nourished the idea that these Marines were basically a vanguard of a force that was going to come in, move through Syria, come to Baghdad, and redress matters and return things to status quo ante.

*Q: Also, British troops had landed in Jordan at the same time.*

FRITZLAN: The British troops had flown from Cyprus to Jordan creating a terrible possible scenario for MacMillan who was Prime Minister at the time. I've just been reading his memoirs. He said, "That while the Americans approved of this, and assisted, the one thing they forgot to do was to get Israeli overflight permission, which they eventually got but more or less ex post facto." He said, "I spent one sleepless night worrying about the possibility that one of our aircraft might be shot down." They sent troops in to bolster the Arab Legion, flew them in from Cyprus. But the Iraqis said, "Why do we want to give permission for your dependents to leave when we have good reason to believe..." They didn't exactly articulate it but we knew what they were thinking. "...when what you're planning is an invasion of Iraq, and you want to get your dependents out of here for that contingency. So it makes every good sense for us to keep them here."

A week or two elapsed before we could really get their agreement, but we did get it. We had to work jolly hard to get it, but in the end they came across and agreed. So we got them all out. That was our first important task and duty. Convincing people to leave was another thing that wasn't all that easy. I had to focus my mind, because Gallman was on the verge of being reassigned to the Department, on the missing three Americans. One was a Bechtel employee, another was a high executive in one of the oil companies. The Bechtel employee was a man with six children. We discovered he was not all that affluent, as the other executive was on the other hand. And then the third person was a

writer who had come to Iraq to try to publicize the fine work that was being done there by the Iraqi government, and the Arab cause generally.

So we pressed the Foreign Ministry on the matter of claims for the families of these people because clearly they'd disappeared and they were presumed dead after several weeks, and it was the responsibility of the Iraqi government to discuss claims--compensation of families--and so on. I mean it was an army major, we had that in black and white, absolutely incontrovertible, who had taken these men out. The Foreign Ministry said, "Yes, but this happened before there was any kind of a government in existence. This happened in a state of public disorder, civil commotion, call it what you like. There was no government in existence and therefore this provisional government cannot assume responsibility." I said, "That is a totally unacceptable argument and I'll tell you why. This happened in the middle of the morning. Earlier at 6:00 in the morning of the revolution I was listening to the radio broadcast naming new ministers, naming the new police chief, naming the new Governor of Baghdad, and a host of other appointments. So your argument simply does not stand up." They accepted it. In the end they had to agree. In the end there was compensation but it was a long and arduous battle, and we were especially concerned about the man who had the large family.

Other things. Our rights were systematically being denied us, we couldn't get anything through the customs. We had gone to great trouble and expense of establishing a commissary mainly on the insistence of the technical assistance people who preferred to shop at some Embassy store and associate with their own people, than to go to the very nice, and very well stocked, local groceries. Thereby we were making ourselves very unpopular in the local business community, and we were actually not saving money as we'd been told we would. We all had to put in a large deposit to make the thing viable to begin with. So what happened? A lot of the goods that were in customs simply perished and the commissary had to close with heavy losses.

The purpose of this, of course, on the part of the Iraqis was just to be nasty, and make things frightful for us. In the hot summer in Baghdad we liked a cool drink in the evening and we couldn't even get our liquor through the customs.

*Q: How did we view the government? Can you give an idea of your impression of the initial government, and how things developed there--the Iraqi government?*

FRITZLAN: Well, in the light of what I've just said, it wouldn't be surprising if we viewed the new government with considerable misgiving; that we had any reason to regard them as friendly, or helpful in any respect. They were constantly arresting our people on a whim, they let them go eventually but it took a great deal of intervention on our part. They allowed the Soviet Embassy to reopen. I don't know when there had last been a Soviet Ambassador. There probably had been one sometime in the '50s, I don't know, but for a long time it had been closed, and they allowed that to reopen. They welcomed the new Soviet Ambassador with fanfare. They sent packing the Chinese Ambassador who was the Taiwan representative, and got in a Maoist Ambassador. They

signed an agreement for military assistance with the Russians. It was a strange thing, though, that they were not about to cozy up to Nasser. Although Nasser had in his propaganda, and his influence, a large bearing on the revolution itself--the uprising, and so on. They made polite noises in regard to Nasser, but they absolutely refused to kow-tow to him. This is in keeping with, of course, the traditional hostility between the two countries.

We suspended our military assistance program, of course. We were there in a position of what you might call holding the fort. It was nothing more than that. We didn't want to take any action which would cause regret later on in a changed atmosphere.

*Q: You were feeling that this was a temporary shaking out period.*

FRITZLAN: We weren't sure. Therefore we were just marking time, hoping that somehow or other matters would change. One of the things that we were under attack for, and I saw the Prime Minister several times, when I was in charge, on matters trying to get him to address some of the abuses we were suffering, but every time I went to see him he would accuse us of stirring up the Kurds in northern Iraq. And when I said, "I know nothing about this. I'll report your statement to the State Department." So I did and the Department came back and said, "You can state categorically to the Prime Minister that we are in no way, shape or form, stirring up the Kurds in any part of such a scheme." So I would go back to the Prime Minister and tell him this, and he just laughed at me, because he said, "I have concrete evidence that I could show you, I'm not prepared to do it right now, but I have concrete evidence of the very thing I'm accusing you of." Later on Rountree came, and Rountree's visit was something.

*Q: This is Assistant Secretary Rountree.*

FRITZLAN: He was on a tour of the Middle East capitals, he was in Cairo at the time. It was published that his plans included a visit to Baghdad. So the press got worked up, the communist press, and started a campaign to keep Rountree out of Iraq. And this got to a very high pitch, and we approached the Prime Minister--in fact, Gallman did just before he left, he left just before Rountree arrived. He asked the Prime Minister if Rountree was welcome--number one--number two, if he came would he be given suitable protection, and the Prime Minister answered affirmatively to both questions. We reported it to the Department, and also of course to Cairo where Rountree was. He was pretty nervous, I can tell you. And we said, "It's possible there will be disturbances, there could even be injuries, that's a possibility, though we are assured categorically that Rountree will be given full protection. In the light of that, and the certainty that if the visit were called off, the communist would gloat over a substantial victory. We recommend that he come." As I said, Gallman had left the day before so I was at the airport to meet Rountree in the Embassy Cadillac. Well, there were also a couple army vehicles, with armed soldiers in each one at the airport, and some motorcycle outriders. We followed one of these army vehicles, and one followed us, and on each side of the car there was a motorcycle outrider. There was a big crowd at the normal exit waiting; they took us through another



exit, but a good part of the crowd had noticed what was about to happen and rushed over to the other exit. I can tell you, we were bombarded with everything you can think of, from mud--it had been raining--to eggs, tomatoes, and what other vegetables you may think of. No stones. They came later.

In getting to the Embassy we were going around one of these roundabouts, a circle, and had to slow down, we had to slow down because some chap from the country had a herd of cattle--they'd arranged this, I'm sure--they were herded right into our path so we slowed down to let them by. In the meantime the crowd moved in and that's when the windshield of the car was broken. We got to the Embassy intact and Rountree was visibly shaken. He was the color of that wall over there.

*Q: This is almost a white wall--off white wall.*

FRITZLAN: And these motorcycle outriders obviously hated the job because they refused Rountree's outstretched hand. That was Rountree's visit. We called on the Prime Minister.

*Q: The Prime Minister was who?*

FRITZLAN: Abd al-Karim Qasim. We called on the Prime Minister during which call the Prime Minister wanted to talk only about our alleged incitement to the Kurds. And Rountree listened to this, and told him that, in effect, he was talking nonsense. We were not inciting the Kurds, that we had nothing to do with any Kurdish uprising. Qasim said, "I don't believe a word you're saying." And that was the end of that.

This is a sequel. Years later it was published in the papers, magazines, and so on--maybe information obtained through the Freedom of Information Act, I don't know. It was published that in that period, the CIA, who were very active in Iran, were working across the border with the Iraqi Kurds, getting them stirred up against the Qasim regime. So the old adage still holds, that a diplomat is somebody who lies abroad for his country.

*Q: Even when he doesn't know he's lying.*

FRITZLAN: Even when he doesn't know he's lying.

*Q: What was Qasim like? He was then the pre-eminent--was it a military junta that was running the country?*

FRITZLAN: He was one of two brigadiers. Qasim quickly asserted his ascendance, and the other brigadier faded into the background. He formed a government of people who were virtually unknown. I don't think there was one of them that we had any information on to speak of. I really cannot think of a single one. They had no training in government, or experience to fit them for their tasks. They were professional types; there was a doctor, an engineer, a writer and, of course, several in the army.

*Q: So was it a military government per se?*

FRITZLAN: It was in the sense that Qasim made all the decisions, but the man who was the most notorious figure in the capital, and who was the most talked about, was the military prosecutor, because they immediately started holding trials, and he was the one demanding the death penalty for all the previous ministers, and others. This military prosecutor was the most feared and notorious figure in the city. Government virtually came to a standstill, you might say. Nothing was done. The Baghdad Pact ceased to exist, naturally. As you said earlier, it was renamed CENTO a couple years later. Qasim was unstable, he was known to be a visionary. People who did know him, or something of him, talked of him as a wild man, a man who had visions, and dreamed up crazy projects, that sort of thing. He called himself Qaid al-Awhad, which means Sole Leader.

*Q: Could you spell that for the transcriber?*

FRITZLAN: Q-a-i-d al-A-w-h-a-d. It comes from Qaid (leader) and the word wahad, which is "one" in Arabic so it becomes the Sole Leader. Early in '59 there was a counter revolutionary coup mounted in Mosul, and we got wind of that--this is one case where we got wind of something brewing that turned out to be in fact something pretty important. Our CIA man was on the ball, and he knew exactly the day there would be a move against Qasim, but for nationalistic reasons. It was no pro-western effort at all, and it fizzled out. The Muslawis, people in that northern city of Iraq, have always had a low opinion of Baghdadis, and they are in many ways the elite of the Iraqi populace. We never learned very much about this. Our sources couldn't help us very much on exactly what was involved. Pretty soon it fizzled out and Qasim in reaction simply tightened the screws even tighter.

*Q: What about the communist party? You mentioned the communist press. Here was a revolution, but you're looking at this in a way...you can do anything in a country...I mean this was our attitude then, but if you let the communist in, you're really asking for trouble.*

FRITZLAN: You don't have to let them in from Russia. All you have to do is sit in the Russian Embassy with pots of money at your disposal, get some of your agents out to pick up people who would be useful. You pay the money and tell them what to do. That's all. That's enough. And write the press articles for them. So the Russian Embassy was very active in stirring up the communist element. I say a communist element, these people were not what you might call intellectual communists, ideological communist. They were just being paid to do what the Russian Embassy wanted them to do. Egyptians and others behave in much the same way for their own purposes.

*Q: You say it was a holding action. So you left there in '59, and Qasim was still in charge at that point.*

FRITZLAN: Yes. Jack Jernegan had come at the beginning of '59 to be Ambassador. I was due to be moved anyway pretty soon. So in July I got orders to go to Barcelona as Consul General. I had said to the Department, "I frankly would welcome a European post." I had been so long and deeply involved in Middle Eastern affairs. Barcelona happened to be vacant. We had at that time a son who or three, and a son six months old. So it came as a welcome assignment, and I was there five years. But one of the things that happened as a result of this was, that with the new administration of Kennedy, with a wholly new Middle Eastern Bureau staff, that I knew few of them, and I'd dropped out of their minds completely. For five years I was Consul General in Barcelona. It was a pleasant, agreeable post. The work wasn't all that exciting, a lot of Sixth Fleet visits which I could have done without. Few in NEA had any interest in me, didn't even know me. In other words, I had to pay a price. In the normal course of events I could have expected to get a mission.

*Q: ...as an Ambassador within the Middle Eastern world.*

FRITZLAN: Of course. I had all the qualifications for it. But it didn't come. On the other hand, I and my family lived in a salubrious climate, in a nice attractive city, with a lot of cultural opportunities, and my district included the Costa Brava, Andorra, the Balearic Islands, and so I spent a lot of time on the road, and that was good. For a young family that was fine actually. Early in my stay in Barcelona, I came back on a Selection Board, and Gallman was then Director General of the Foreign Service. He said to me, "Are you interested...we're opening up missions in lots of African countries, and would you be interested in one?" And I said, "Frankly, the answer must be no. I've been in Barcelona less than a year, my family is young, and I don't want to expose them to the rigors of an African post. And secondly, if I'm to be a Chief of Mission anywhere, it makes sense to be one in the Arab world." And he said, "I understand that."

Our Ambassador in Madrid was John Davis Lodge, a nice fellow and all that, very amiable, but his one idea was to cultivate close ties with monarchists, people with titles, support Franco in every way possible, and I took issue with him on this, saying that we ought to put out lines to opposition groups and people in the cultural mainstream. In Barcelona I did make a point of seeking out, and cultivating in an informal way, people who were known to be members of a so-called opposition which was obviously an underground movement.

*Q: This of course was towards the shank end of the Franco regime.*

FRITZLAN: But one could see that things were approaching a critical stage. Franco wasn't going to live forever, and that there was going to be change, and I took the view that we should not be unprepared for it and taken by surprise; that we should have contacts with the people in the underground opposition who were inevitably, of course, to the left of center, and that we should be prepared for a Spain after Franco that had a government that would be left of center. This was almost inevitable in a country like Spain with its history and so on. But Ambassador Lodge was quite unreceptive to the

idea. It didn't stop me from doing what I did and sending reports in. He thought I was not on the right track at all but he never tried to censor my reports. Anyway we had good personal relations.

I don't have anything further to say about Barcelona except the Sixth Fleet was frequently in port and most of my time seemed to be taken up with representational duties which I found rather boring.

*Q: Speaking as a former Consul General in Naples, I agree with you.*

FRITZLAN: Every Rear Admiral who came into port thought he was blazing a trail. He came saying in effect, that I'm sort of the Ambassador for the United States. It got to be rather tedious, and boring.

Then I was assigned after five years in Barcelona, almost five years, assigned to Alexandria which again was a nice agreeable post from a standpoint of living conditions, a nice house and all that, and good climate. Phillips Petroleum Company was just beginning explorations in the western desert, and eventually found oil. The work again was not all that exciting. The social life was fairly active, not nearly as active as it had been before Nasser or in the early stages of Nasser's rule because all the wealthy Levantines and Greeks and whatever, Egyptians too, some of them, had been sequestered. That is to say, that their wealth had been confiscated, and in many instances they'd just left the country, gone to Lebanon, to Greece, Italy. And I was rather thankful for the fact that we didn't have that high inbred conspicuously wealthy lot of what you might call expatriates living in Alexandria. The life they pursued was well illustrated by Durrell in his book on it.

*Q: Yes, the Alexandria Quartet. So really the major thing that happened there then was the war. We're talking about the war in June 1967, known as the Six Day War.*

FRITZLAN: The only thing of significance that happened when I was in Alexandria was the Six Day War which was the cause of my departure when it comes to that. We could see the war clouds on the horizon, and it didn't come as any great surprise though it was hard to understand Nasser's folly. I was listening to the radio that morning, the World Service of the BBC, and Nasser's statement that US had intervened in the war by providing air cover for the Israelis. That alerted us to the real likelihood of serious trouble directed against Americans. And sure enough. I presided over the evacuation by sea of Americans in Egypt. We'd got our dependents out so that they and unnecessary staff had pretty well left the country. We had enough warning for that. Then, of course, we learned very soon that the Egyptian air force had been virtually destroyed on the ground by the Israeli planes. So there was nothing left but to plan for the evacuation, warning Americans to keep off the streets, stay home, observe the blackout scrupulously.

And then one morning, I guess it was about 20th of June, mid- June, the Embassy group arrived very early in the morning at the Marine terminal and railway terminal. Our own

people had been taken by bus from a special hotel where we congregated--it was a safe place--early in the morning to the same place and we got on board a ship that had been provided us that had come for that purpose from Greece. Three days later we were in Piraeus, Athens. We put our affairs in Egypt then in the hands of the Spaniards, and I'm not sure when we reopened the Consulate General. I guess it was about the time the Embassy was restored to American operations. It was some months, possibly a year later.

*Q: You were then picked up and sent...moving up to Thessaloniki, didn't you? Or did you go back to the States first?*

FRITZLAN: I came back and, of course, they didn't know what to do with me. I was one of a considerable group of people from Arab countries where relations had been suspended. I was due for home leave and they said, "Come back from home leave, and then we'll think about it." So I came back and I reported to the Department and they put me on a job involving USIS, and how we could improve the effectiveness of USIS. Katie Louchheim was Assistant Secretary for Cultural Affairs, and Jake Canter was her deputy, and I'd known Jake when he was in Madrid when I was in Barcelona. He was Cultural Affairs Officer there. They cooked up this job that lasted a month or two. I interviewed every single desk officer in regard to our cultural affairs, and wrote up the report and got a number of commendations later on from Katie and from her successor, and this gave me a feeling of accomplishment when I needed a bit of a boost.

But after that I spent a year '68--most of the year of '68 was spent in the Pentagon. I was a member of the State Department's staff in a joint State-Defense Study Group on military requirements for the '70s, and I represented the Middle East interest in that matter which was interesting. We had some trips abroad, we went to Europe, NATO headquarters, and then on another trip to the Middle East starting out in Athens, and Ankara, Asmara, Naples, and back to the US. That was a very interesting trip actually. And then we wrote a report and that consumed the year of '68.

And the following year, the beginning of '69--the first half of '69--I chaired a joint State-Defense-CIA Committee on the likely eventualities in the case of another Middle East war; how things might develop, a scenario of likely developments, and what steps at certain stages we might take, and so on. This was a most frustrating activity because to get together the Defense people and State people, and CIA people to agree on the language was like pulling teeth.

This lasted several months. I wrote a report and got everybody's signature on it, sent it in and they said it was a good job, and that was that. I'm glad I didn't have to read it two or three years later because what happened...

*Q: Yes, you're talking about the '73 October war.*

FRITZLAN: That's right. So then I was told that I was going to be assigned to Salonika, Consul General, but that before going I should take a six month course in modern Greek.

I tell you it was one of the most excruciating things I've endeavored to do. It was total immersion. The group consisted of a chap who was young enough to be my son, and myself. He was a new Foreign Service Officer, he was going to Athens, I was going to Salonika. But it was a challenge, I worked darned hard on that but it almost drove me around the bend. I gained a considerable degree of proficiency, I must say. Reading a newspaper was hard but I could get the gist of it though. Spoken language is one thing, written language another in many ways is quite different, grammar and all that.

We got to Salonika in March of '70, and left in July of '71. I had a problem with the Ambassador.

*Q: Henry J. Tasca?*

FRITZLAN: Yes. He arrived in Athens just a month, if that, before I arrived in Salonika. My wife and I decided to try to get to Greece by sea. What happened was, I discovered that there were Yugoslav counterpart funds, and that we could travel on the Italian Line to Naples though the Department threw every obstacle in my path that they could think of--the NEA Bureau. Someone told me, "Look, talk to the transportation people." I did, and they said, "Sure you can do that. You write a letter to the Embassy in Belgrade and they'll release counterpart funds to pay for the ticket." We traveled on the "Christoforo Columbo" to Naples, and then went overland through Italy, Yugoslavia to Salonika.

Well, my difficulty with the Ambassador, in a nutshell, related to my reporting. Before I left Washington the desk officer in the Department said to me, "We regard Salonika as an important listening post, and we get political reports from Salonika that on the whole are more interesting than what we get from the Embassy. So please write your despatches direct to the Department with a copy to the Embassy." So, okay. When I got there, pretty soon it became plain that the Ambassador was in total support of Papadopoulos, the head of the military junta that ran Greece, and ran it in a very dictatorial arbitrary way, and human rights were out of the window. I was reporting my observations, and conversations with people--many of whom, of course, were opposed to the regime--who gave me instances of torture and severe punishment without trial, and this sort of thing. Tasca didn't like some of these reports, so he sent through his Political Counselor, who was a new arrival...

*Q: Elizabeth Brown.*

FRITZLAN: Precisely. She called me one day and said, "Oh, I've got to tell you that the Ambassador wants you from now on to send your political reporting to the Embassy for forwarding to the Department." I said, "I've got to think about that." So I sat down and thought about it, and I remembered what the desk officer had told me. I got out the Foreign Service Manual that said, in effect, that constituent consular posts should report political and economic matters directly to the Department by despatch with copies to the Embassy concerned, except in unusual exceptional circumstances. So I wrote to the Ambassador and said, in effect, I have had your message through Elizabeth Brown, and

I've thought about the matter. I must tell you that the desk officer told me the following before I left...(I didn't tell him that he got more interesting reports from us than from the Embassy), but I told him in general what he said in regard to my mode of reporting. I said, "Furthermore, the Foreign Service Manual says the following..." So quite frankly I hesitate to change my method of reporting unless you, after consulting the Department, instruct me to do so." Now, I was due for retirement. I knew I was on my last assignment and I wouldn't have wanted another one. I was ready to retire. I'd had 33 years of service, my pension was at the top, just about, of what I might expect. I knew I was never going to get along with Tasca, and I did not intend to compromise myself in any way. I knew that by writing such a letter I was virtually at the point where I might consider packing my bags, and that's more or less what happened in the course of the next six months. I retired then on July 1, 1971, exactly almost to the day 33 years since I entered the Service.

*Q: I was in charge of the Consular Section in Athens at this time and I can say I would have Americans, or Greek Americans, who would come in and tell about torture, etc., and at the Country Team meeting, and the CIA station chief would immediately say, "That's not true. We hear from our sources..." Their sources being the people who were doing the torturing. It was not a grand period in American diplomacy.*

FRITZLAN: It was not a glorious period in our relations with Greece. I know, I had a fall out with Jim Potts, the CIA station chief, and he and I...we were having a drink in his home, and somehow we got on to the matter of our policy in Greece, and we had a most violent disagreement. I'll never forget. Funnily enough, Jim Potts called me a couple of months ago, and I wasn't sure who he was until he told me we'd met in Athens. He didn't say anything about his CIA connection, and he said he wanted to meet me and would I have lunch with him because he had something to talk about that related to Morocco. I said, "Sure." So we met, and I enjoyed a very good lunch talking about events in Morocco when I was there. We didn't get on to the Greek subject at all, and it's just as well. He was then very amiable.

*Q: He was a man who always would cut me down when I would speak about the problems that came through the...I wasn't a political reporter but through the normal dealings with Greek Americans.*

FRITZLAN: I could never have got on with him.

*Q: I know we're just about at the end of the time, but looking back on your career what gave you the greatest satisfaction?*

FRITZLAN: I suppose the three years I was in Amman; just after the Arab-Israeli war. The birth of Israel and you might say, the coming of age of the state of Jordan. In my three years there I was in charge of our mission half the time, and I had a feeling then that I was accomplishing something that was profoundly interesting intellectually, a challenging mission, and that I was contributing something not only through our role in the world, but contributing something meaningful to the country where I was serving.

Q: *It can be a very exciting time to be where things really are happening.*

FRITZLAN: They were happening, yes. I would hate to be out there now frankly, because nothing is happening.

Q: *We'll stop here, and thank you.*

*End of interview*