Dr. Susan L. Woodward is professor of political science at the Graduate Center, where she teaches courses in comparative politics and international relations. She has taught at Yale, Williams College, Mount Holyoke, and Northwestern. She is the author of three books, including her latest, *The Ideology of Failed States*, and more than 100 articles in journals and edited books. Her employment outside academia includes the UN and OSCE, the Brookings Institution, and the Centre for Defense Studies, King’s College, London.

Andrés Besserer Rayas: You’ve had such a distinguished career, combining academic research with policymaking. How did your academic training bring different elements to policymaking?

Dr. Susan L. Woodward: I would reverse your question to say that I got involved in policy by a fluke, I was invited as a visiting senior fellow at the Brookings Institution. After I left Yale, I was at Stanford’s Hoover Institution on a fellowship, but that was 1989-90. The director of Foreign Policy Studies at Brookings realized that events in Eastern Europe were momentous, so they got money from the Ford Foundation to produce a book about the upcoming transition there. I arrived, however, when Yugoslavia was starting to fall apart; suddenly, there were all these journalists wanting to understand events, people I could educate, as a Yugoslavia expert. So, it was more pedagogical than scholarly in my interaction.

ABR: In *Socialist Unemployment* you argue that economic factors were crucial to the dissolution of Yugoslavia; many blamed ethnic divisions. Could you talk about this?

SW: Washington was just brutal on that. People would accuse me of making an economic argument, as if that was ideological. Part of the reason for *Socialist Unemployment* was that I am interested in unemployment. I still am. There is a rich history about unemployment, including Marx and Polanyi, but as a political scientist, I saw it as a political paradox that a socialist country (Yugoslavia) would have high unemployment and not face a legitimacy crisis. Same thing with *Balkan Tragedy*: the idea in Washington that there were political aspects to Yugoslavia’s economic crisis made people furious. The causes must be “ancient ethnic hatreds”!

ABR: Could you speak a little about your teaching?

SW: I have to say I love that *Basic Theories and Concepts* course [taught at the GC] because it is unending fascination. Every year I re-read everything almost entirely. And I think it is the students here that make the teaching just wonderful. You guys are fabulous! You are willing to take on the hard work and to engage with the literature and to talk to each other. How much more fun can one have as a professor?

ABR: What are you working on now?

SW: While researching my last book, with grants from the Ford Foundation and Carnegie Corporation of New York, I also held many workshops on its focus and commissioned many papers from scholars and peace activists in the Global South. I am editing one set from people who have attempted peacebuilding in their own countries. What can people from the inside, as we called it originally, tell us rather than always focusing on the internationals? I have papers from Mozambique, East Timor, Sri Lanka, Macedonia, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Nicaragua. Second, I’ve been wanting to put together a book of my essays, many never published and others, published, that could benefit from new commentary. Long delayed, it is a serious project this fall. Third, I have piles of documents and notes from my work with UNPROFOR that I want to resurrect. I was in the Balkans at a very important time and I cannot tell you what a learning experience it was to work for a UN mission. The literature on the Balkans in the 1990s is now huge; I’ll see what I can still contribute.