

Cheema JK. *The Black Attache*. Caumet Editions, ISBN-10.1960250809.

The Black Attache by JK Cheema is a blend of history, travelogue and reflections in the form of short vignettes from Cheema's life. In the *Black Attache*, Cheema shares her memories from the events she experienced during the India-Pakistan partition to her growing up in India, nearly dying on the last train out from Lahore, Pakistan. It covers her time at graduate school in Ann Arbor and her very lengthy and unusual career with USAID. She served in several backstops, mostly in difficult posts such as Burkina Faso, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Eritrea and Afghanistan and became a senior foreign service officer. After 25 years overseas, including several consultancies, she retired to Madison, Wisconsin, settling back in the US with her husband Jeffrey Wright. *The Black Attache* is the first of her two books sharing her life. It is a snapshot of a young girl born in India, aspiring to make a difference in the world and doing so as a foreign service officer with USAID.

Cheema joined USAID in 1991 as a Health officer. Her first tour was in Burkina Faso as the director of the Health and Populations office. After two years she was assigned as the acting USAID Rep and tasked with closing the USAID Mission. In 1995, Cheema moved to the Regional Central Asia Mission in Almaty as the General Development Office in the Social Transition Office where she primarily managed the health reform portfolio. In 1991, Cheema moved to Armenia as the Deputy Mission Director, responsible for establishing the Armenia mission as an independent USAID Mission and being responsible for the Nagorno Karabakh programs. In 2001, Cheema was assigned as the Mission Director to Eritrea, where she was promoted into the ranks of the senior foreign service. In 2005 she moved to Ghana, first as the Director of the West Africa Regional Programs (WARP) and then as Mission Director for the newly established West Africa Regional Mission. After mandatory retirement at the age of sixty-five, Cheema continued to work first as the senior policy advisor to the USAID/Afghanistan Mission (2008-2009) and then as the Acting Mission Director to Armenia (2009-2012). During spring of 2016, she did two short term assignments, one to Sierra Leone and then to Guinea-Conakry. In the fall of 2016, she moved to Almaty as the acting Mission Director for the Central Asia Mission. Cheema finally retired from USAID work in the fall of 2017 and devoted her time to community work and as a writer in Madison, where she settled with her husband Jeffrey Wright and where she founded "A Place to Be," a salon for creative conversation and dialogue.