INTERVIEW I

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INTERVIEWEE: LINCOLN GORDON

INTERVIEWER: PAIGE E. MULHOLLAN

PLACE: Homewood House, John Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland

Tape 1 of 3

M: Let's do get an introductory statement for the transcriber. You're Lincoln Gordon, and your two positions in the Johnson Administration were, first, as ambassador to Brazil, a position which you continued in from the Kennedy years. Then in the beginning of 1966, you became assistant secretary of state for Inter-American Affairs and United States coordinator for the Alliance for Progress, a position in which you stayed until the middle of 1967.

G: June. June 30, 1967.

M: Right. You did announce about the beginning of 1967 that you were going to depart, but stayed on through . . . .

G: On January 18, 1967 I had an exchange of letters with the President, which was published.

M: All of that is a matter of the record.

G: That was the day of my formal election as president of Johns Hopkins.

M: Right. You held some relatively high positions in government, Mutual Security Agency and others, at the end of 1940s and into the 1950s. Did you ever come into contact with Mr. Johnson at all during that period?

G: No. I didn't know him at all when he was a senator. I may perhaps have shaken his hand at some large reception, but I certainly didn't have any personal acquaintance with him. Really, until he became president we virtually didn't know each other. I think on one occasion, when I was back on consultation in Washington as ambassador in Brazil, I met him either at the White House or at the State Department, but not really to talk to. So we were really not personally acquainted at all before he became president.

M: That sort of answers the next question I had. You are frequently mentioned as one of those who were involved in the original planning in the Alliance Program for President Kennedy, but I assume, from what you say, that President Johnson, then as vice president, was not intimately involved in that.

G: That's right. My involvement in that was really a result of a series of accidents. My previous governmental service after the war was not connected with Latin America. I spent the war on the staff of the War Production Board. Then for several months in 1946, 1 was on our delegation to the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission. This was when Bernard Baruch was the chairman of the delegation, and we were trying to negotiate the so-called Baruch Plan for international control of atomic energy. But in the summer of 1967 I was asked by a war-time friend who was then deputy assistant secretary of state for economic affairs, C. Tyler Wood, to help the State Department in the working up of the Marshall Plan into a specific program. I got deeply involved in that on a part-time basis from the summer of 1947 until June of 1949; then full-time in Paris on Governor [Averell] Harriman's staff from the summer of 1949 unti1 1950; then back with Harriman in Washington from 1950 to 1952, when he was special assistant to President Truman. In 1951, he became the director of the Office of Mutual Security, and I became head of one of its divisions. I was assistant director for Mutual Security. Then I went to London as chief of what was left of the AID Mission and also minister for economic affairs in the embassy from 1952 to 1955. In the summer of 1955 I returned to Harvard with a chair in the field of international economic relations, mainly at the Business School, but also, as it later developed, with an appointment in the Center for International Affairs there. I was developing the international business and economic program for the business school but also got involved in teaching and research on economic development in underdeveloped countries generally.

It happened that my personal assistant was a man with considerable background in Latin America. He was an Englishman, originally born in Peru, who had worked both in Peru and in Venezuela. He got me interested in Latin America. A lot of the case materials that we used in my course were Latin American. And about 1958, along with Professor Edward Mason of the Harvard Economics Department, several of us worked up a joint project, which got a sizable Ford Foundation grant, on problems of relations between government and the private sector in development of underdeveloped countries.

M: Specifically with regard to Latin America?

G: No, this was world-wide. The idea was that we would have a number of general studies but mainly individual country studies. I undertook to lead one on Brazil. At that time I had not been in Brazil or anywhere else in Latin America. I knew no Spanish or Portuguese. My first visit was in 1959, partly on this research project and partly as a member of a Ford Foundation mission. They were looking into what they might do in Latin America. They previously had not had any programs there. I went with Alfred Wolf, who was their full-time staff member, who is now with the Inter-American Bank, and with Reynold Carlson, who is just retiring as our ambassador to Colombia, who was then a professor of economics at Vanderbilt and had had a lot of background and experience in Latin America. He had worked on the Brazilian Joint Economic Development Commission back in the early fifties. He had also worked for the World

Bank on Brazil and Chile. He knew both languages and knew the South American continent very well.

I continued to give about half of my working time to this project--through 1960. At the time of President Kennedy's election I was devoting most of my time to it. Shortly after his election--I guess about mid or late November--I got a telephone call from Adolph Berle in New York--whom I knew not intimately, but in a casual way--saying that the President-elect had asked him to form a task force on policy toward Latin America. They wanted an economist and they thought I would be the best person. I tried to beg off on the ground that my acquaintance with Latin America was mainly with Brazil, that I knew nothing about Central America or the Caribbean, and that I could name for him about half a dozen American economists with years of interest in Latin America. But he refused all that. The task force assignment was not a heavy one, in time. We were to meet on a few occasions in New York for an afternoon and then arrange a two or three-day meeting to wind up, which actually took place in Puerto Rico for New Year's Day, because we were invited to the fourth inauguration of Governor [Luis] Muñoz Marín. The other members of the task force were Professor [Arthur] Whitaker from the University of Pennsylvania, who was an expert on the political and legal development of the OAS, the Pan-American Union, the Inter-American System; Professor Robert Alexander from Rutgers, who was a specialist on Latin American labor matters; Teddy [Teodoro] Moscoso; and Arturo Morales-Carrion. In addition, Dick Goodwin was a member and our direct link with the President-elect. The report of that task force, of which only a few copies were made, is one document which has not surfaced anywhere.

M: What happened?

G: [It] never leaked. It's an interesting phenomenon.

Arturo Morales-Carrion was then secretary of state for Puerto Rico and later moved to Washington to work in the Inter-American Affairs Bureau, and still later with the Inter-American Bank.

We agreed at our first meeting that one of the major elements of the policy should be a vigorous thrust toward Latin American development, combined with internal institutional reform, and hopefully with a strong political democratic bias in it. I mean democratic with a small "d" of course. The foreshadowing of this had already begun under the Eisenhower Administration with the creation of the Inter-American Bank and with the Act of Bogotá [Bogotá Agreement], which had been agreed to with Douglas Dillon, who was the American representative that summer of 1960. The term "Alliance for Progress" had been coined during the Kennedy election campaign for use in a speech which was never delivered, a speech somewhere in Florida, but the speech was mimeographed [and] had been given to the press. Dick Goodwin, I think, was the author of the term, based on some consultation with people in Washington who knew what Latin American attitudes might be toward these particular words.

The major elements of the economic chapter of the task force report were drafted by me and were later approved by the President-elect. That became the foundation of the program. I don't regard myself as the father of the Alliance for Progress on that ground, simply as one of the foster fathers, because the contents of the ideas had been worked on for years by Latin Americans. They included particularly people in the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America, ECLA, in Santiago, led by Raul Prebisch. Another intellectual parent was Pedro Beltran, at that time the prime minister of Peru; and there had been a good many others over the years. On the political side, the notion of a strong progressive democratic thrust was represented by the so-called Caribbean Club: Muñoz Marín himself; President Lleras Camargo of Colombia; Pépé [José] Figueres of Costa Rica; and Romula Betancourt of Venezuela. So their thinking and the ideas of various American economists were all part of the background of the Alliance for Progress recommended in our task force report. President Kennedy accepted the recommendation. He mentioned the progress in his inaugural address briefly, and his state of the union message in somewhat greater length, and of course, finally, on March 13, 1961, in a major presidential speech in the White House.

M: But you weren't in on the inter-governmental considerations between the inauguration time and that March speech?

G: I certainly was.

M: You were?

G: Oh, yes. What happened there was related to my previous background of work in the government . . . . I was not one of the Harvard professors who was involved with Kennedy's campaign, but that group were all close friends of mine. When the cabinet and the sub-cabinet were named, they were practically all people that I had had some previous association with. On about January 10, 1961, ten days before the inauguration, Dean Rusk called me. I had known him ever since Oxford days--we were both Rhodes Scholars. He was a couple of years ahead of me. I had known him well in the years after the war, when he was at the Rockefeller Foundation. He tried, at one point, to persuade me to join the staff of the Rockefeller Foundation. Now he had been designated as Secretary of State. He asked me to come and see him in Washington, which I did. He proposed that I be assistant secretary of state for Economic Affairs. I had given some thought to possible offers of that kind and decided that I really didn't want to go to Washington full-time. The man then in the job was Edwin Martin, who later became--

M: Became one of your predecessors.

G: Yes, that's right, and also ambassador to Argentina, and is now head of the Development Assistance Committee in Paris. [He is] a thoroughly competent man, a professional, a foreign service officer. I said to Dean Rusk I just saw no reason to make a change in his position merely for the sake of making a change.

But I also said that I had become very much interested in Latin American matters. I told him about the task force report. I said that I understood from Mr. Berle that the President-elect had endorsed its conclusions, and I would be interested on a half-time basis--and I thought I could negotiate this with Harvard--in helping convert the gleam in the eye, the broad notion of the Alliance for Progress, into specific terms. That was a kind of counter-offer. He was enthusiastic about the idea. He talked with George Ball, who had been named Under Secretary for Economic Affairs and with Chet [Chester] Bowles, who was the general under secretary. In fact, the next day George Ball called me up in Cambridge with great enthusiasm and said, "Your first assignment will be to present to Mr. Otto Passman and his subcommittee the 500 million dollar appropriations request for the Act of Bogotá."

M: Sounds like he was trying to find a fall-guy!

G: As far as I know, this is the only appropriation request which got through the Passman Subcommittee intact. Mr. Passman wanted to cut a hundred million dollars out of it. Those were the honeymoon days of the Kennedy Administration, and we got the whole thing.

M: You were put in a class by yourself then! (Laughter)

G: I had to spend a full week in testimony before Passman--I think it was in March. It took four afternoons and one morning, if I recall correctly, Monday through Friday, and it was quite a gruelling and grilling experience. But it was successful. On the other hand, what happened after the inauguration generally with respect to Latin American affairs was very odd.

The President tried to persuade Berle to accept the assistant secretaryship. It was agreed that much more cohesive leadership was desirable. This had been one of the recommendations of the task force report: that there be what Berle called a "command center" for Latin American policy. The policy had gotten too dispersed among the State Department, the Pentagon, the Treasury, the Commerce Department, the Agriculture Department; everybody had his own Latin American policy. The Export-Import Bank, of course, was much involved. There really had to be some policy focus. It ought to be in the State Department. Berle thought it should be at the rank of under secretary.

In our task force discussions, we suggested that the higher rank might be desirable, but was unrealistic. Soapy [G. Mennen] Williams had already been appointed Assistant Secretary for Africa with a statement by Kennedy that the job would be "second to none." All you would do would be to change the title of all of the geographical assistant secretaries to under secretary, and it wouldn't make any significant difference. But when Kennedy invited Berle to take the job of assistant secretary, Berle said he would do it only with a change of title. Kennedy was unwilling to upgrade the title then--I guess on this general ground. They finally came out with an organizationally dreadful

compromise, which was to re-create a so-called task force, but quite different from the pre-inauguration one. That first task force was what a task force should be. It was a small group of people, presumably knowledgeable, with a specific assignment [and] a limited period of time. It filed its report in January, and it dissolved. That's what a task force is supposed to do.

Well, this post-inauguration group was to be an operational task force. Berle was given the title of chairman of the Task Force on Latin American Policy. He was given an office in the new State building, [which] was just opened at that time, in that inner corridor where the secretary and under secretary's row is. But there was also an assistant secretary for Latin America, who at that time was Tom Mann. Tom was expecting to be and was designated ambassador to Mexico, and he was very anxious to get out. He had been in Washington for quite a number of years as assistant secretary for [Inter-] Latin American [Affairs and], prior to that assistant secretary for Economic Affairs. He was very tired, and he was terribly troubled by the fact that what turned out to be the Bay of Pigs was in gestation at that time. So the Berle task force was set up, with some of the same members as the first one and also some differences of membership. There was a chief of staff appointed, who was Ted Achilles, who now runs the Atlantic Council of the United States. Ted had been our ambassador in Peru for several years before that. Bob [Robert M.] Sayre was also on the staff. He and I shared an office during the days I was in Washington. He is now ambassador in Uruguay, and for quite a number of years was deputy assistant secretary, and a very good one.

But the nature of the task force's responsibility, as distinguished from the assistant secretary's responsibility, was very obscure. And it was a most unhappy situation.

In due course, Tom Mann left for the embassy in Mexico. He managed to get himself out of Washington before the Bay of Pigs took place. Wymberley DeR. Coerr, who was deputy assistant secretary, became acting assistant secretary. I went to two or three task force meetings and rapidly came to the conclusion that this was an incredibly inept form of organization. I had a special assignment in connection with the Alliance for Progress. I had to get ready for the testimony to Passman's subcommittee, and I was also working with Dick Goodwin on the drafting of the President's March 13 speech on the Alliance for Progress.

M: Goodwin was still in the White House at that point?

G: Oh, yes. And I was involved in consultations with various Latin American officials in Washington: with-Felipe Herrera, President of the Inter-American Bank; with [Raul] Prebisch occasionally; and particularly with Jorge Sol, who was at that time OAS assistant secretary general for Economic and Social Affairs. He was a Salvadorian economist, a very able fellow. We were working up the substantive ideas for the Alliance.

So I stopped going to task force meetings. I fortunately had only one very vague indication that some kind of an invasion of Cuba might be in the wind, and I'm happy to say, beyond that, was not involved in the slightest in the Bay of Pigs.

M: A good place to be.

G: That's right. Because of this work in preparation for what came to be the meeting of Punta del Este in August, it was agreed that Dick Goodwin and I should both join the American delegation to the Inter-American Bank governors meeting which--took place in Rio in early April. There would be an opportunity between formal sessions for us to consult with Herrera, with Jorge Sol, with Prebisch--those three in particular--about how the Inter-American meeting should be organized; what its structure should be; what the agenda should be; what kind of staff work should be done in preparation for the meeting; where it should take place; and so on. I did that for a week. Our delegation was led by Doug [C. Douglas] Dillon, who was secretary of the Treasury, and it included Ed Martin and John Leddy. On the American side those three [and] Dick Goodwin and I, I think it's fair to say, were the principal policy developers. John Leddy was--

M: Later the assistant secretary for Europe.

G: That's right. He was then assistant secretary of the Treasury for International Affairs, and very closely associated with Dillon, as he had been previously in the State Department. I think it's fair to say that on the American side we were the five most active policy developers on the Alliance.

M: Through none of this, Mr. Johnson has never been in on the planning, the sessions, the task force, or anything?

G: No. I don't think he was involved at any point. At least, I never had any personal contact with him during this period. Well, largely I think, as a result of that particular trip and my own very substantial background in Brazil, which became evident to Dillon and Goodwin, and also to Senator [J. William] Fulbright who was in the party, apparently somebody suggested to President Kennedy that I might make a good ambassador to Brazil. Either late in April or early in May Chet Bowles, who was acting secretary--Dean Rusk was traveling somewhere at the President's request--got in touch with me to sound out whether I would be interested or not. I said I would, but not until September, because I was way behind on my work for Harvard by this time. I felt I had to get some things done for the university and in any case, the preparations for Punta del Este were occupying most of my time.

President Kennedy called me to his office for a discussion in May. He grumbled about the delay but finally accepted it. In fact, the news leaked in late May in the New York Times, which was rather embarrassing to me and also to Jack [John Moors] Cabot, my predecessor in Brazil. But he had been warned in advance and it worked out all right.

I went to Rio in October. As far as I can recall, I met Vice President Johnson at some point during the next two years, but it was a very casual kind of meeting.

M: There's no profit served of repeating things that you did for the Kennedy people. I have no intention of doing that.

G: No.

M: Are there any things that you have thought of since that you might like to add to what you did for them?

G: Well, to tell the truth, I've forgotten most of what I wrote for them. Let's assume that that story is complete. So we really move to November, 1963.

M: 1963, right. Then you served in Brazil through that transition. Was there a breaking-point in policy as well as the presidential change? Could you notice a change-from the vantage point of an ambassadorship in Brazil?

G: In the short run?

M: Yes.

G: Well, the shift of assistant secretaryship from Ed Martin to Tom Mann, which took place--I believe--in December--it was one of the earliest appointments that President Johnson made--didn't have any immediate impact on Brazilian policy. I think there was some sense of a change in general approach toward Latin American policy. I think it's fair to say that Ed Martin, although not one of the original foster fathers of the Alliance for Progress, was much more positively interested in it than Tom Mann was. I think Tom Mann always felt that this was, in substance, not a bad program, but greatly oversold in rhetoric and to some extent a diversion from the more earthly policy problems. Tom was a very hard-headed, down-to-earth sort of fellow, perhaps more cynical than either Martin or I am about Latin America because he's had many, many more years of experience in dealing with the continent. (Laughter)

M: Did his appointment anger Latin Americans, as some of the American press, at least, implied at the time that it did?

G: Well, some. As far as Brazil is concerned, I would say not. But you have to remember that Brazil at that particular moment was in the throes of a near chaotic situation. The Brazilian revolution, or coup, which, took place on March 31 and April 1 of 1964, was already in the making. We didn't know it at the time, but in retrospect it's quite clear that it was in the making at the end of 1963. The situation was deteriorating in such a way that at the time of the Kennedy assassination there was enormous preoccupation with what was going on inside Brazil.

M: They just weren't too interested in who was assistant secretary in the United States.

G: No. That's right.

M: Maybe the question should be the other way. Is it true, in Brazil at least, that the personal attraction that Kennedy had for the Latin American people and leaders, charisma or whatever, was so great that it would make it difficult for anybody who represented Mr. Johnson after the assassination occurred?

G: Yes. This I think is quite clear. President [João] Goulart had made an official trip to Washington back in April of 1962, and President Kennedy was supposed to return the visit. We actually had two dates scheduled. One was in July of 1962, and one was in November 1962. They were both cancelled. The July one, because of another phase of internal political turmoil in Brazil having to do with Goulart getting back full presidential powers, and the November one, again because the situation there wasn't too good. And then there was the added pretext of the Cuban missile base crisis and the preoccupations of Kennedy at home.

But the Kennedy image was enormously popular in Brazil, and what it was in his life was multiplied almost twentyfold by his death. The experience we had that Friday afternoon and evening and the following weekend, I suppose, was repeated all over the world. But in Rio it was a most dramatic thing. We opened a book at the chancery and another one at our residence, and over that weekend we had a line of people stretching for three or four blocks. It was continuous, day and night, of every class of person, every type, poor, rich, middle class, most of them weeping. It was a most extraordinary outpouring of emotion. So as a reaction to that, there would inevitably be some doubts about Kennedy's successor.

On the other hand, there was certainly no hostility to Vice President Johnson. There was essentially a feeling that this was an unknown person who was stepping into the presidency under the most difficult circumstances. There was a great deal of very favorable comment in the press and elsewhere on the manner of his assuming responsibility.

M: Right. Right. One of his first acts, too, was to sort of combine the powers in the way that you intimated [a] while ago the task force had suggested it should be done.

G: That's right. That part was welcomed. And the second thing in Latin American policy was to reconvene a meeting in the same room, the East Room of the White House, where Kennedy had made his March 13 speech--I think this was really Johnson's first public act in foreign affairs--and to rededicate himself to the alliance. The speech ended--it was a very good speech--by saying, "Let's make the success of the Alliance for Progress a living memorial to the memory of President Kennedy." So the general atmosphere from that point of view was very good. Now in Brazil we were involved in a very complicated situation. I didn't get back to Washington until January.

M: You did come home?

G: January of 1964. All of us ambassadors were instructed (a) not to resign, and (b) not to come to the funeral. This was in November. We had all kinds of official ceremonial duties. I think I presided--I'm not a Roman Catholic--at three different masses in honor of President Kennedy. (Laughter) I learned a lot about it.

M: Yes, I could say. (Laughter)

G: [I learned the] Roman Catholic liturgy and so on during the course of that time.

But we were engaged in some very serious official negotiations in Brazil, some of which came to involve the President personally. With the Brazilian political situation deteriorating the way it was, I was very preoccupied with the problem of preventing a fairly radical left wing group around Goulart from developing anti-American issues as a way of trying to generate popular support.

M: Their traditional means of doing that, right?

G: That's right. We've been seeing in Peru in the last few months a very good case of that kind of exploitation. There were various possible things in Brazil which might have been exploited that way, although the traditional Brazilian-American relationship was very good. It's one of the most harmonious in the whole Western hemisphere.

One of the issues had to do with their foreign exchange position and a rather heavy accumulated external indebtedness. There was a possibility of some kind of debt renegotiation. Goulart had changed the whole cabinet in Brazil during the summer and fall of 1963, most of the members very much for the worse from our viewpoint. But his then-finance minister was not bad, a former governor of Sao Paulo, a man named Carvalho Pinto. We had had in Sao Paulo, in November, 1963, just a week or two before the assassination in Dallas, the annual meeting of the Inter-American Economic and Social Council. Governor Harriman headed the American delegation. Ed Martin was with him. I, of course, participated very actively. Carvalho Pinto headed the Brazilian delegation. I might give you the spelling of that for your transcribers.

M: Yes, right.

G: It's C-A-R-V-A-L-H-O, and then a separate name, P-I-N-T-O. But some of the members of the Brazilian delegation were real troublemakers, and they tried to find ways of organizing the Latin Americans against us. It had been an extremely difficult week. Some of these people were very anxious to have a unilateral abrogation of debts to the United States.

M: That's always a popular issue. (Laughter)

G: That's right. A "unilateral moratorium," they called it. I had persuaded Carvalho Pinto that this would be a very bad idea and that there was an alternative, which was a peaceful debt renegotiation, not just with the United States but also with Brazil's European creditors and the Japanese. There were precedents for this in the case of Colombia and in the case of Turkey. I got the documents detailing the way those settlements had been made. I was in more or less constant communication with Carvalho Pinto about this. And then, about the same time that Kennedy was shot, Goulart suddenly fired Carvalho Pinto, or put him in such an embarrassing position that he had to resign, and appointed the former president of the Bank of Brazil--whose name escapes me at the moment--who was not too bad a fellow, but a kind of mediocre politician--as his successor.

Then there suddenly appeared in the presidential palace in Brazil a kind of grey eminence, an extraordinary man, apparently exerting quite a lot of influence on Goulart, who was basically moderate in his view and with whom I developed quite a close relationship. We conceived the notion of an exchange of letters between the two presidents. After all, this tragedy of the assassination had recently taken place in the United States. Goulart always liked to claim--or pretend--that he had developed an especially warm, personal relationship with Kennedy during Goulart's trip to the U.S. Kennedy had always been expecting to come down to Brazil. This was now impossible. There was a little bit of truth to it, but it was mostly Goulart's politicking. It was a popular thing from his point of view. So the notion of now establishing some kind of direct communication with the new president of the United States seemed fairly attractive.

(Interruption)

G: The name of Goulart's adviser was Jorge, J-O-R-G-E, Serpa, S-E-R-P-A. He and I worked up a possible exchange of letters. I had communicated all the background of this to Washington. A little bit to my surprise--because I still had no personal feel about President Johnson's approach to these matters--I'd been told that, yes, the President would be happy, if the text of the letter was all right, to open this kind of correspondence with Goulart. [He] thought it would be a good thing under the circumstances, because I'd explained the background, the reasons for it. In fact, the exchange of presidential letters took place sometime in December. I drafted our side of it for President Johnson. Somebody in Washington thought my draft was a bit too long, and a couple of not terribly important paragraphs were cut out, but it was basically an indication that we would be happy to join with European creditors of Brazil in working out some arrangement for lightening the burden and so on. It turned out to be quite important, I think, in deflecting the anti-American group. The fact is that when the coup took place in Brazil in March, 1964, there still had not been any focus on anti-American issues. We were very fortunate from this point of view, and I take a certain amount of pride in the fact.

In January I came back on consultation. Since we're looking at calendars, maybe I can find the dates. This was my first time in Washington after the change of the president. We had taken a Christmas trip that year up to Bahia by road. I was driving myself. It was fascinating. Marvelous trip. I left on January 20 for Washington.

M: That was the first time after the assassination then?

G: The first time that I was in Washington after the assassination, that's right. Yes, I had a series of dates in Washington starting on the twenty-first and running through that week. Then I'd been asked to go off on one of these speaking trips in the United States. I spent the following week in Louisville, Chicago, New York, Boston, and so on.

M: Did you see President Johnson during that week?

G: No, no. That was a source of great disappointment to me. I saw Tom Mann briefly on Wednesday, January 22, and then at length on Saturday, January 25, and again before I left.

I had some personal problems, too. I'd been asked a month before the assassination by President [Robert F.] Goheen of Princeton whether I would be interested in going there as Dean of the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs. They'd just gotten thirty-five million dollars. As he said, it was the one important job in academic administration that didn't involve fund raising. I was thinking about it fairly seriously. You see, we'd been in Brazil for two and a quarter years by then, and I had resigned from Harvard. They said they'd be happy if I wanted to come back, and I really had no very clear plans about the future. I was not in a hurry to leave Brazil. In fact, I realized how hard it would be for a successor to get up to full speed in the very complex conditions we were experiencing there. On the other hand, with a new president . . . . I'd developed a very close, rather warm, personal relationship with Kennedy. I'd gone back on the average of four times a year, and I'd seen him on every such trip. He'd always expressed great interest in the country, and so on. So I must say, when I went back to Washington in January, I just took it for granted that I would be meeting the new president. After all, there I was, ambassador in the largest of the Latin American countries, and one which was in a pretty turbulent state, with various explosive potentialities. But Tom Mann, said, "No, things are different now. After all, the President's only been in office for two months, and he's terribly preoccupied with all kinds of things." Tom himself was in the throes of the Panama crisis.

M: Panama thing had broken just--

G: Yes, that's right. That's right.

M: --that two weeks before.

G: That's right. So he said, "Unless it's absolutely indispensable, the President doesn't want to see ambassadors when they come back." I tried to make the case that it would not be good for my own influence in Brazil for me not, at least, to be photographed with the President to indicate some kind of personal connection. He agreed to this, and I think there was some checking with the White House. Either it wasn't convenient for the President's calendar, or as a matter of principle he didn't want to. In any case, I did not see him on that trip. I confess, I was rather disturbed by that.

M: Did that remain typical through the balance of your ambassadorship?

G: No. No.

M: Access difficult?

G: No. No. I'll explain in a moment how things changed quite a lot after that. But the other business items I wanted to consult about in Washington were perfectly satisfactorily resolved. And I asked Tom--I'd known Tom Mann well for a long time--I asked his advice as to whether I ought to consider this Princeton thing and, indeed, what was my standing, anyway, with the change in the presidency. He said in effect, "My belief is, and I know this is the President's also, that it would just be a tragedy if you were to leave Brazil at the present time. There's no telling what the country is going to go through, and whoever we might be able to get as a successor to you would take months to catch up to where you are." He said, "You just ought to put any other job out of your mind until, somehow or other, the situation in Brazil settles down." I guess I was half disappointed about the President's unwillingness to see me, but I decided to go back to face the Brazilian situation as it was emerging. Well, of course, the deterioration went on very rapidly.

The next time I was in Washington was very soon afterwards. In March the President had asked that all of the American ambassadors in Latin America come back for a two or three-day conference on policy toward Latin America, including a meeting with him and participation in an anniversary ceremony of the March 13--1961--speech. In any case, the conference took place on March 16, 17, 18. It was those days, starting with a reception at the White House the night of the sixteenth. I don't seem to have it down on my calendar here, but it did include a meeting in the Cabinet Room, I think on the afternoon of the eighteenth, with about four or five of us ambassadors together with the President. I think Tony Freeman, who was just shifting from Colombia to Mexico, was there. I don't recall what others were there. But this was the first time, I think it's fair to say, that the President really identified me as an individual at all. Otherwise, I was just one of . . . .

M: A name in the slot.

G: Yes, that's right, and one of hundreds of people shaking his hand as they went through some reception line somewhere.

The conference of ambassadors went all right. The OAS meeting was very difficult, because the Panamanian thing was still going on. It was on that occasion that the President said that there had not been a settlement of the Panamanian dispute, although an OAS . . . .

M: After an OAS statement to the contrary.

G: Yes. I still remember the Paraguayan ambassador's face. It was a very difficult situation. Poor Tom Mann, who also thought there had been an agreement, was fit to be tied. It was all about the word "negociar," whether that meant negotiate or--

M: Discuss or whatever.

G: --discuss. That's right.

Now that was the second time I met with the President. By then it was clear that something drastic was going to happen in Brazil. I did not meet again with the President on that trip, beyond those two occasions. The first was being one of the crowd at the OAS reception and then this small meeting in the White House with four or five of my colleagues. But the President did ask each of us then to say something about the situation in our countries of assignment. He obviously took real interest in what I had to say and apparently was impressed by the way I said it. I did have some consultations with the Secretary of State, the head of the CIA, Tom Mann, and various other people about the deteriorating situation in Brazil on Thursday before I left. I was asked to make a reassessment of the situation as soon as I got back.

I got back on Sunday night, the twenty-second. That was the beginning of Holy Week, that was Palm Sunday. During the next week, the Brazilian situation got worse and worse. There were some very important top secret communications on what was happening. The crisis finally came to a head on the thirty-first of March and the first of April, when Goulart fled Brasilia and an acting president of Brazil was sworn in as his successor.

Then there was the famous question about whether or not we should recognize the change of regime or what should be done about that. And I recommended on Thursday, April 2, that the President send a telegram to the acting president of Brazil, a man called [Ranieri] Mazzilli, M-A-Z-Z-I-L-L-I, who had been speaker of the Chamber of Deputies and was the next in line because there was no vice president. Goulart had been elected vice president , and had already gone up to the presidency when Quadros resigned in 1961. The recommended telegram was sent. I have been criticized a great deal for that, subsequently, by liberally inclined journalists and professors, but most of them have totally forgotten the circumstances. Most of them think that what I recommended recognizing was Castello Branco after the issuance of the so-called First Institutional Act. In fact, that was not the situation. The First Institutional Act came on April 9, and

Castello Branco wasn't elected president until two or three days after that, and took office, I think, around April 15. However, that's a separate story [and] doesn't involve President Johnson directly.

But the President, of course, was consulted about the telegram. Indeed, we had a number of teletype conversations between Rio and Washington. They were mainly between George Ball and me, and George was on the other end of the telephone to the President while these were going on. We worked out the wording of the telegram on the teletype. The President never forgot that, because he felt that later on, when the Brazilians were asked to help out in the Dominican affair and assented right away and with some enthusiasm--which was not the case of most of the Latin American countries, in fact, Brazil was the only large one which joined in--that there was some connection between that and his telegram in April 1964. So I think it was clear that when my name was later considered for the assistant secretaryship, this rather--from his point of view--successful set of events involving Brazil and the Dominican Republic had something to do with his wanting to appoint me. The next time I was back in Washington--and this time had a rather considerable conversation with the President--must have been about two months later, because we had a very, very busy time in Brazil after the change of regime.

The next time had to do with money. It was either late May or early June. I know it was in time to get 50 million dollars before the fiscal year ended. It looks from the calendar here as if it must have been June. Yes, I called on President Castello Branco on the ninth and left the next morning, Wednesday, June 10, for Washington. Actually, I went to Boston first to deal with some personal business and was in Washington the week of the fifteenth. There was a White House meeting on the afternoon of the eighteenth. It says here: McGeorge Bundy, White House. Here we are: President Johnson, twelve o'clock, twelve noon, on Thursday, June 18. That's right. That was quite a long talk. He was tremendously interested. I had said in a speech at the Brazilian War College in May that I thought that sometime when people look back on it, that the events in Brazil that spring would be regarded as one of the critical events in the evolution of international relations generally in the 1960s. President Johnson was much intrigued by this statement and why I thought so. He was all in favor of supporting this new regime as a matter of policy, including financial help for the Brazilian balance of payments. So that was the next personal contact.

M: Had he, by that time, developed any personal point of view regarding the Alliance or Latin America generally, that contrasted to President Kennedy's? Anything that stamped it as his?

G: Well, I don't know that I was aware of it then, but I certainly became so later on. At the time I was appointed assistant secretary in January of 1966, I had a very long talk with him about his attitudes towards the Alliance. It still seemed to me basically the essence of the correct policy for Latin America. He said, "Well, you know, if you go back to 1963, when I came into office, one of the first things that I became convinced of was that

Latin American policy was going very badly. We had some fine rhetoric in the Alliance for Progress"--these are not his exact words, but it was the substance--"but I looked into the figures. I found that such-and-such amounts of money had been authorized but the amount actually spent was far below that." He said, "I had it looked into and rapidly became convinced that the program execution was leaving an awful lot to be desired. I thought the time had come to move away from nice words and promises to some real down-to-earth action. This is one reason that I put together, under Tom' Mann, the State Department and the AID jobs." Incidentally, I think this was exactly the right thing to do.

Perhaps I should pause to say that in the spring of 1961, after Kennedy had offered me, and I had accepted, the ambassadorship to Brazil, I went with Adlai Stevenson on his tour of South America in early June. In the middle of that tour I was telephoned by President Kennedy to ask whether I would take the assistant secretaryship, and I begged off on the ground that I really didn't want to and preferred the job in Brazil. In fact, I'd been asked about it before by Bowles in April.

M: You mentioned the Bowles one earlier.

G: Yes. Bowles had asked me in April. But my heart was really set on the work in Brazil. I thought that the assistant secretary ought to know Spanish, which I didn't, although I had a very good reading knowledge of Portuguese and the beginnings of a spoken knowledge. But it seemed to me also clear that many of the problems were in Central America and the Caribbean, an area I still knew nothing about. So I had begged off in April, 1961 and made six alternative suggestions of names to Ralph Dungan, who was then working on personnel, and also to Bowles and Rusk. One of those names, incidentally, was Bob [Robert F.] Woodward, who was offered the job, and who took it. This telephone call came to us in Santiago, Chile, where he was our ambassador and had been for about two weeks. Immediately after I said "No" to President Kennedy, he said, "What do you think of Woodward?" I said, "Look, I just met Bob Woodward at the airport out here . . . ."

M: Here he is!

G: No, I wasn't in his office. I was in our hotel. I said, "I'm going to be with him again this evening, but I don't know him yet. There must be dozens of people in Washington who know him better than I do." But that same night he called Woodward and offered him the job. Being a professional foreign service officer, Woodward was not in a position to refuse the offer.

M: Hardly, even if he'd wanted to.

G: Well, he did want to.

M: Did he really?

G: Oh, yes. I think he loved the notion of settling down in Chile and being ambassador there. He knew what a terrible meat-grinder the assistant secretary's job is.

M: As evidenced by the number of people who have held it in the last six years.

G: Yes. But I would in no case have been willing to accept it without responsibility for the AID side of it, too. In fact, as you can see from this account, having been convinced that the Alliance for Progress was the most important thing in our relations with Latin America anyway, it seemed to me that to be assistant secretary without effective responsibility for that part of our relationship would be only half a job.

But as I say, in early 1966, looking back on it himself, President Johnson mentioned more effective implementation of the Alliance as an important objective. And I think quite honestly. He felt that more results ought to be produced. He was very much given to wanting results that you could count. Sometimes, I think, he went too far in wanting numbers. I used to get annoyed at some of the speeches, later on, that would talk about so many houses or so many classrooms. It was his particular style. But the trouble is that many of those figures that were cited, although the numbers were accurate enough, really give a misleading impression, because they didn't place the thing in the perspective of the total problem.

M: Right. The press was given to saying that President Johnson, because of his South Texas background and so on, had some kind of a special interest in Latin America, as compared with, perhaps, President Kennedy? Do you think that's true?

G: Well, in Mexico, of course, it's absolutely true. And I think, rather by extension from Mexico, [it] tends to be true for Latin America. But I think it's particularly concentrated on the relationship with Mexico.

M: It's a Mexican special interest rather than a Latin American, in that sense.

G: Well, I think it did become, by a kind of psychological transfer, a general interest in Latin America, but it really began with a Mexican interest. It began with his experience teaching Mexican-American kids, and, later on, with his many contacts with Mexico. There's no doubt in my mind that this was a very important thing to him, personally and psychologically, as well as politically. I was with him during three meetings with President [Gustavo] Diaz Ordaz of Mexico when I was assistant secretary, and I was invited back to the White House after I was here at [Johns] Hopkins, when Diaz Ordaz came to return one of these state visits to Washington. I was with President Johnson on the April, 1966 trip to Mexico City where he dedicated the Lincoln statue. It was a very impressive affair, there's no doubt about that. Certainly all of the indications were that he was enormously keen about this relationship. I don't want to give the impression that this transfer of interest to Latin America more generally was artificial. But I think President Johnson's emotional concern was concentrated mainly on the Mexican relationship, and then rather by extension, became related to the rest of the hemisphere.

M: I didn't mean to divert you from your chronological account there, but you had, by that time, begun to have a pretty fair idea of his thinking on important matters.

G: That's right. Well, on my subsequent trips back as ambassador . . . . Let's see, we were in 1964, the Dominican thing. No, that wasn't until the spring of 1965.

M: Spring of 1965. Right.

G: Yes. That's right. In the rest of 1964, my principal interest in coming back had to do with the AID program in Brazil. I think for the next couple of trips, if I saw the President at all, it was rather briefly.

M: No crisis matters required long visits?

G: No, no. Things were going really very well. They were, rather, details of economic negotiations. By this time, Tom Mann had moved up to the under secretaryship for Economic Affairs. Jack Vaughn had become assistant secretary. But the people I really dealt with were mainly within the State Department: Tony [Anthony M.] Solomon, who was then deputy assistant secretary for Economic Affairs; and on political matters, the Secretary directly.

That, of course, was an unusual thing. But having had a personal relationship with Dean Rusk going back to the 1930s--and a really quite close one in the 1950s--I always saw him, if he were in town, when I was back in Washington. He always showed a great interest in political developments in Brazil and, indeed, in economic developments. I think many of these interests originated in his Rockefeller Foundation experience. He really did know the Latin American continent quite well and showed this in his participation in foreign ministers meetings, where he was extremely effective. I probably saw the President in the latter part of 1964 on one of these consu1tation visits in connection with the size of a program loan. But it was not an appeal to the President over anybody's head. It was, rather, just a kind of . . . .

M: Formality-type thing. Right.

G: Yes. And from my point of view, everything was going very well. Then the next significant thing, where I sensed a direct personal involvement by the President in my affairs in Rio, had to do with the Dominican crisis and the whole notion of the Inter-American Defense Force. The President sent Governor Harriman down, on a rapid circuit trip, to explore the possibility of getting cooperation of other Latin American countries in the formation of an international force. Brazil was by far the most responsive of the countries on this. This must have been a week or ten days after the Dominican intervention. This was . . . .

M: April of 1965.

G: April of 1965. That's right. Let's see. I'd been up in the Northeast, and Harriman arrived May 3. On May 4, he and I flew up to Brasilia together, and we had lunch with the present President Castello Branco and the foreign minister. Wonder why that didn't get on the calendar? But I remember the lunch very well.

M: You say the present president. You mean then-President Branco, not . . . ?

G: Castello Branco, yes. The foreign minister then was Vasco Leitrão da Cunha, who later came to Washington as ambassador. By the end of that lunch we'd really essentially worked out, subject to a formal OAS vote, a plan to set up the Inter-American Peace Force. The Brazilians were very clear that they could not do this just bilaterally or unilaterally.

M: But they were perfectly willing to go along.

G: Oh, yes. And indeed, at the foreign ministers meeting which took place in June, the Brazilian foreign minister was chairman and exerted himself with great effectiveness to get a favorable vote on the thing. Then of course as you know, Brazil was asked to name the commander of the Inter-American force. Castello Branco took a great interest in the details. I felt, although my incoming telegrams continued to be signed "Rusk," even at that 5,000 mile distance, that President Johnson was also taking an extremely close personal interest in this matter.

M: Knew about what was going on?

G: Yes. Well, that describes generally the kind of relationship we had until January of 1966. Things were going, on the whole, quite smoothly in Brazil. We had this very effective cooperation on the Dominican affair.

There were a couple of things in connection with Vietnam. And there, I never could tell whether the President was personally involved or not. Along with all other ambassadors, I was asked to explore the possibility of Brazilian forces or other contributions to Vietnam. I resisted this. I think I had good foresight in that particular case, and with hindsight, I feel even happier that I did. I think it would have just created a shambles in Inter-American relations if any Latin American country had contributed forces. That is certainly the case in Brazil. It would have been a disaster.

We had in late 1965 the important foreign ministers conference which worked out the amendments to the OAS charter, where Dean Rusk headed our delegation. He and I were practically living together for a week, though he had insisted on staying in a hotel instead of in our house, because the senators on the delegation were there and he felt he ought to stay in close touch with the senators. We saw each other all the waking hours, every day. One of those days, when we were driving from the Embassy to the meeting place, he asked what my plans were for the future. I said I didn't really have any then. I

told him about this Princeton offer, which I had turned down. So I thought maybe I'd go back to Harvard sometime. He expressed the strong hope that I would be willing to stay in Brazil for another year. My wife was beginning to get a little restless. We have four children, and they were all in the States by this time and at various stages of education or jobs. After all, we'd been in Brazil for a full four years by then.

M: Fairly long term, actually.

G: That's a pretty long time. That's right. But she finally agreed that as long as she could get back home once or twice a year that she'd be willing. So we thought everything was all set. We had a home leave due, and we took it in December of 1965. We went to our summer house in New Hampshire, which also has an oil furnace, got all our children together, except one who was in the Army in Germany, had a fine time, and became thoroughly rested. Then in the middle of January, I was to spend one day in Cambridge, Massachusetts, seeing old friends there and talking to some Harvard professors who were interested in Latin America. Then [I was to] go on to Washington for a few days consultation and back to Brazil. January, of course, is a very quiet month in Brazil, because it's mid-summer, and there wasn't very much going on officially, anyway. That day in Cambridge I got the famous LBJ telephone call. This I think may be of interest because--

M: This is the kind of thing that we do like to get.

G: --there are some amusing features of this particular story which, among other things, casts some on the obsession of the President's with leakages in the press. I had just finished lunch and a kind of seminar discussion with this group of professors--this was at the Harvard Center for International Affairs--when the director's secretary found me and said, "Your office in Washington is trying to reach you on the phone. They say it's urgent." I said, "All right. Our meeting here is just breaking up." I was scheduled to take a four-thirty plane to Washington, anyway. So I went down to her office and put in a call. Jack Kubisch, who was then head of the Office of Brazilian Affairs, said, "George Ball wants to talk to you." Dean Rusk was out of town again, and George Ball was acting secretary. Dean Rusk, in fact, was going around the world. This was one of the Vietnam peace exploration tours.

M: This was right during the Christmas pause of 1965-66.

G: That's right. Exactly. During the bombing phase. I got George Ball, whom I'd also known intimately for years, on the phone. George said, "Where are you?" I said, "Well, I'm up in Cambridge at the Harvard Center for International Affairs, but I'm on my way down to Washington. I'm coming down there on a four-thirty plane." He said, "Well, can you stay put for a few minutes? The President wants to talk to you." And I said, "Well, I can if it doesn't take too long, because I'm supposed to go back and pack up, and I don't want to miss my plane." He said, "No, I'm sure it will be just a few minutes. Just

give me your number and stay where you are." So I gave him the telephone number, went out, and told the secretary that the White House would be calling me.

The telephone call came through. The President began by calling me Linc; he'd never called me Linc before. He said, more or less as follows: "I'm very anxious to talk with you. You know, for quite a period of time now, I've had this problem of the two hats of Sargent Shriver. I've come to the conclusion that he can't continue both in charge of the domestic Poverty Program and the Peace Corps. I've finally decided that he should concentrate on the domestic Poverty Program. For the last several weeks, having decided that, I've been looking for the very best possible man to run the Peace Corps and have concluded that that man is Jack Vaughn. I've propositioned Jack Vaughn today, and Jack has indicated that he's willing to do it. And now I hope very much that you'll consider coming back from Brazil and taking on this job of assistant secretary for Inter-American Affairs and coordinator of the Alliance for Progress. You know how important it is. I don't have to tell you." Then he went on to dish out a dose of real soft soap, and there must have been a good five minutes of it. About what a marvelous job I'd been doing in Brazil, how splendidly things had been going, their cooperation in the Dominican affair.

M: A long slow curve.

G: I was obviously the man for the job, he said. When he finally paused for breath, I said, "Well, Mr. President, this is really a total surprise to me. I've just completed a month's holiday, and I'm feeling fine. You probably don't know it, but it just happens that when Dean Rusk was in Rio in November, we talked a little bit about the future, and he urged me very strongly to stay on in Brazil for the full year 1966." I said I'd agreed to that and hadn't been thinking of anything else. I went on to say, "This would be quite a change. Of course, I know how important the job is. I'm naturally very flattered by everything that you say. I'd like to think about it some."

Then he said--obviously a little disappointed at this reaction--"Well, you know it just so happens that I've got some boys from the press coming in." It must have been about half past two in the afternoon [that] this conversation was taking place. "They're coming in at four o'clock. I am terribly anxious to tell them about the new Shriver responsibility and the Vaughn appointment, and I'd love to be able to announce your appointment as assistant secretary at the same time. It would be splendid to get all three of these together."

Well, I just wasn't that sure that I really wanted to take on the job. For one thing I wanted to get some feel about how Johnson worked and what his attitudes currently were about Latin America. I was beginning to get worried about the competition from Vietnam displacing everything else, and I was really very anxious to have a chance to talk with George Ball. Also, obviously, I wanted to talk with my wife about how she felt about a sudden move.

M: A normal reaction.

G: Yes. And it occurred to me in a flash that the one thing that would really be convincing to the President was to mention the need to consult my wife. Because I had heard the stories that he always consulted Lady Bird when he made a difficult decision. So I said, "Well, Mr. President, I'd love to accommodate you, you know. It happens that I'm, coming down to Washington this afternoon anyway. My wife isn't here at the moment. This is a dramatic change from her point of view. The least I can do, in fairness to her, is to talk to her. I'll be perfectly happy to give you a definite answer, one way or the other, tomorrow morning. But I really do need a few hours to think it over and to talk with her."

Well, he accepted this quite well. He said, "Well, I see how you feel. I'm sorry about it. I don't know what I'll do at four o'clock with the press. Maybe I'll announce the Shriver and Vaughn things anyway and maybe not." I said, "Well, look, I'll be coming down. I'll be in Washington by seven o'clock, if the planes fly on time. And I'll be in touch with you first thing in the morning." Then he came back to the soft sell line for another minute or two and said he certainly hoped I would accept. There was nobody else he could think of who could do as remotely a good job and so on.

M: He's pretty good at that.

G: Oh, he certainly is. That's right. It was a nice kind of arm-twisting. And I said, "Well, thanks very much for your confidence, Mr. President. I'll be in touch with you," and hung up. I started to leave to go and pack up, and the phone rang again. It was George Ball. George said, "I didn't want to tell you what it was before the President did, but I just wanted to tell you that I certainly enormously hope that you're willing to take this job on. Dean's out in Samoa, but Dean and I both would be absolutely delighted." I said, "Well, there are some aspects of it I would like to talk with you about, and I'm on my way to Washington anyway and if--"

Oh, I forgot one other important thing. The President said before he hung up, "I hope you won't talk to too many people. You know how I feel about leakages to the press." I said, "Yes. I know very well. Whom have you talked to?" And he said, "I've talked to Dean Rusk by phone out in the Pacific, and George Ball, and Tom Mann, and Jack Vaughn, and that's all." I said, "Well, I have no desire to talk to anybody other than those, except my wife. So you don't have to worry about leakages as far as I'm concerned." This is an important part of this story, as you'll see in a moment.

Now back to the conversation with Ball. George finally said, "Well, I'll be delighted to talk with you. Why don't you come here directly from the airport when you get in at seven o'clock. I'll be in my office." I said, "Fine," and hung up and went and packed.

When I got to Washington I was met, as usual, by Jack Kubisch. As we found my baggage and got into the car I said, "I've got a date with George Ball. I hope you won't

mind-dropping me at the Department." He said, "No. That's perfectly all right. I'll take your bags on out to the Cosmos Club," where I stayed. He said, "I want to get home myself," because it happened that his mother-in-law was up from Florida and was leaving that night. So I said, "That's fine. I'm sure I can get a ride from the State Department without any trouble." Then I asked him about the terrible floods in Rio that January, where we'd been doing some relief work. He answered the questions, but there was obviously some constraint on his part. We're really close friends. He had been the AID mission director in Rio under my direction for two years and is a fine, fine fellow. We'd gotten very close.

Finally, he sort of broke off from this kind of casual conversation, and said, "Look, I don't want to play games with you. We know each other much too well. Are you aware of the rumors that have been buzzing around the corridors of the State Department all afternoon?" I said, "No." He said, "Well, you probably don't know because you were on the airplane at the time or about to take the airplane. But at four o'clock, or shortly thereafter, the President announced that Shriver is going to be full-time director of the Office of Economic Opportunity and Jack Vaughn is going to take his place in the Peace Corps." And Kubisch said that "the department is just alive with rumors that you're going to come as assistant secretary." I said, "Well, why are the rumors about me?" He said, "Well, first, you would be an obvious choice for the job. But apart from that, the White House called up the Bureau of Public Affairs. First, they called up practically everybody trying to find out where you were earlier in the day to reach you on the phone. And secondly, they called up the Bureau of Public Affairs to ask for your biographical sketch. And really, once the Vaughn thing was announced, it didn't really take much putting of two and two together to conclude that you would be named assistant secretary."

Well, here I was sworn to the President not to say anything about this job to anybody except the named people. I found this rather embarrassing. Jack was a very close friend. So I turned it a little bit sideways. I didn't tell him I'd talked to the President. I said, "Well, this is probably what George Ball wants to talk with me about." And then I said, "What would you do if you were in my place and you were asked?" [I] managed to keep the conversation on that ground for the rest of the time until he delivered me at the Department. Should I take the job if, in fact, it were being offered?

Well, I went up and started to talk with George Ball and put in a call to my wife. I still had not been able to see my wife. When I had gone to our friends' house in Cambridge to pack up, she had been out shopping somewhere. I got her on the phone and we talked for about twenty minutes. As a good wife should, she said in effect, "Well, whatever you want to do, I'll do." Actually, I think she knew that job was a killing one, but rather welcomed the idea of coming home.

M: Nice to go home after four years.

G: That's right. So that part was all right. Then I went back to talk with George about the pros and cons. There had been some earlier talk about the possibility of my succeeding Tom Mann--it was known that Tom Mann wanted to leave the job of under secretary for Economic Affairs. At one point somebody had asked me whether I would be interested in that job, if it ever opened and so on. So there was a little discussion about the relative merits of these two jobs and also what the President's general attitudes were, and various other things of this kind.

At a certain point there was a knock on the door of Ball's office. It was George Springsteen, who was Ball's executive assistant at the time. He came in with a very glum look on his face, and Ball said to him, "George, what's the matter?" George said, "Goddamn it. Dan Kurzman of the Washington Post has been running up and down the sixth floor corridors all afternoon. He's come up with a story that Linc Gordon is going to be named assistant secretary for Latin America. Jack Vaughn has done his best to dissuade him, and several others have, but he says he's going to print it. He's absolutely sure that it's true."

I said, "Well, it might be true, and it might not." I said, "This is what we were talking about. The fact is that I haven't decided yet." But George Ball said, "Oh, my God. We'd better call Bill Moyers and alert him. It wouldn't be at all beyond the President, if he reads a story like that, for him to change his mind just on that account." George Springsteen went off to alert Bill Moyers, and we went back to talking about the pros and cons of the job.

We talked about many aspects of it, and by about eight o'clock I made up my mind I would take it. I told Ball, and he said, "Well, I didn't want to tell you this before, but the President said that if you decided you would take the job, he would like the two of us to have breakfast with him in the morning at half past eight." I said, "Fine." So he then dropped me, on his way home, at the Cosmos Club [and] said he'd pick me up at eight o'clock or ten past eight [on the] way down to the White House. I was dog-tired by then. [I] had some supper and went to bed.

The next morning I was having a cup of coffee at the club while waiting for him to call for me. This time he came in with a very long look on his face. I said, "What's the trouble?" He said, "The President called me about half past twelve, woke me up out of a sound sleep. [He had] seen the story in the early edition of the Washington Post. He was fit to be tied! He was cussing and swearing and saying, 'Goddamn it!' He wanted somebody's head in the State Department. Wasn't there anything he could ever do that didn't leak out in the press? And he had a half a mind to send Gordon back to Rio and find somebody else for this job. I haven't the faintest idea what kind of mood we're going to find him in now, when we turn up at the White House." I said, "Well, we'll keep our fingers crossed and see what happens."

The two of us arrived at the White House and were taken up to the family quarters. The President was already having breakfast, with a couple of other places set.

And the President greeted us very cordially. He didn't say a word about the leakage in the Washington Post and also didn't say a word about the job of assistant secretary. He said to me, "How are things going in Brazil?" So I answered. [He said,] "What do you really think about the Alliance for Progress? Do you think it's worked out well or not?" I told him something about my connection with the early part of it and some things that I thought had worked well and others that hadn't. I said that there had been a lot of confusion about some aspects, the problem of the relationship between domestic reform and aid, how, unfortunately, the Alliance had come really to symbolize just an American aid program instead of a common effort, and various things of this kind. This was the point at which he told me about his feelings in late 1963, which I've already recounted.

I think a full hour passed. Of course, the President and I were doing all the talking. George Ball was just listening and occasionally interjecting a word. [It was] perfectly obvious that both George and I were getting increasingly curious as to whether I had a new job or not. It happened that at ten o'clock that morning, Robert Weaver was to be sworn in as secretary of Housing and Urban Development. About nine-thirty Hubert Humphrey turned up because he was going to the ceremony, too. The President greeted him as he came down the hall, and made some wisecrack. Then he said, "Of course, you know George Ball. You must also know Linc Gordon, the new assistant secretary for Latin America."

M: And that was the first time it had been mentioned?

G: The first time he'd mentioned it. And he winked at me as he said it.

M: As if to say, "I knew all the time, and you didn't."

G: That's right. And I grinned back.

M: What else could you do?

G: Then he turned to me and said, "How do you suppose that story leaked in the Washington Post?" I said, "Look, Mr. President, I think I know pretty well how it leaked. I think I can tell you. But if you really don't want a story of this kind to leak, you have to act differently in the White House." He was rather upset by this and said, "What do you mean?" I told him about this conversation with Kubisch on the way back from the airport the night before. He said, "Oh, well, I see what you mean." I said, "If you really didn't want it to leak, what you should have done was to have gotten George Ball to talk to me, perhaps to tell me what it was about, or in any case, to say that you wanted to see me and let me come down and talk to you in person. But you have your telephone operator chasing all over the place trying to locate me. Then you have somebody ask for a biographical sketch. There must have been fifty people in the State Department, secretaries and officers together, who knew that you wanted to get in touch with me somehow yesterday. Once the story of a vacancy was announced, when you announced Vaughn's appointment to the Peace Corps, [it was] perfectly obvious that--

M: All those people were experts at drawing inferences.

G: --basically, I would fit."

Well, he relaxed about that and kind of grinned. Then we talked about the job and so on. Then he said, "I think this is absolutely fine. After we've sworn in Bob Weaver, the press will all be there, and I'd like to announce your appointment, too." And I said, "That's fine." So that's the way it was done. Oh, we also talked about a successor in Brazil, and that turned out to be a fairly complicated thing.

Well, that was the beginning, of course, of a wholly new relationship. I saw a great deal of him between then and my departure to come up to Baltimore, and, I guess, on two or three occasions since. I don't know how best to handle this for your purposes.

M: Well, perhaps the nature of the types of things that, as assistant secretary, you get to the President with.

G: Yes. There were several: first, there were the crisis things. The most important was the final liquidation of the Dominican crisis. Of course, there were some timing problems about when I could start on the new job. We still had to go back to Rio and pack up. I had to be confirmed by the Senate. Jack Vaughn was very anxious to get over to the Peace Corps. And de facto, he moved over about the next day or two, and I moved into the office and began to operate, even though I hadn't been confirmed, for about ten days or two weeks. Then we went back to Brazil for two and a half weeks to pack up and to say our farewells and so on. Then I came back in late February. I was officially sworn in and took over.

The Dominican affair was moving toward a peaceful solution. By this time, [Hector] Garcia Godoy was the interim president of the Dominican Republic. Ellsworth Bunker was doing marvelous service as head of the OAS committee of three. But we had some very tricky problems. Of course, the President had an intense personal interest in this thing.

M: Yes. He was personally involved in the whole business.

G: Yes. Absolutely. In incredible detail. I was rather surprised to discover how [and] in what detail he was following it. So we had a number of sessions, I think a couple before I left to go back to clean up in Brazil, and many between then and the election, sometimes alone but mostly also with Ellsworth Bunker. Ellsworth used to commute between Washington and Santo Domingo those days. Sometimes there would be CIA and various other experts around as well. I think usually, but not always, Mac Bundy, who was still in office.

M: He was just about to leave, I guess.

G: Yes. He was on the edge of leaving. I can't remember the exact date. Do you remember when [Walt W.] Rostow took his place?

M: Well, there was a little lag in between. I think Bundy left about April 1, and Rostow came in maybe two, three, four weeks thereafter.

G: Right. Well, in any case, that was one topic which involved a number of personal meetings.

M: On that subject, particularly, some of his critics, and admirers, too, have talked about what they called a Cuba Syndrome. Did the President make it explicit that a Cuban solution was just not going to be tolerated in the Dominican Republic, no matter what?

G: Well, it seemed to me clear that this is what had been in his mind. Of course, I was not there at the time of the intervention. I became involved only nine months after the crisis, and things were moving towards a rather satisfactory solution. One of the great questions was: What in the world should we do if [Juan D.] Bosch got elected?

M: Well, that was really what I had in mind.

G: Well, on that point Bunker and I talked at great length. We concluded, and Bob Sayre, too, that this had to be a fair election, a genuine election, and we had to live with the results. We thought it was important that the President should know this was our feeling. So in a meeting sometime--it must have been the middle of May, a week or two before the election, Ellsworth Bunker and I went in to see the President.

Tape 2 of 3

We'd agreed that Bunker should report to him on what the actual election prospects seemed to be. We had run a couple of polls, and they showed--it turned out they were accurate--that [Joaquin] Balaguer would win by a very sizable majority. But we were worried as to whether they were really correct or not. With encouragement from me, both Bunker and [John Hugh] Crimmins had made it a point to cultivate Bosch some. So that we had a relationship established, re-established really, with Bosch. John Martin, in his day as ambassador, had been on the closest possible terms with Bosch. We had agreed that it was I who would say something that the President obviously wouldn't like to hear, namely that, however the election might come out, we'd better make up our minds in advance that we were going to live with the results. So at an appropriate point in the conversation, I did say exactly that. I said, "It's not a happy idea from my point of view, because I know Bosch would be extraordinarily difficult and I'm the one who would have to be taking most of the heat from day to day of living with it." But I said, "It seems to me it is the only possible stance for us to take." Well, he gave me a rather sharp look and clearly didn't like hearing this. But then, he nodded his head, and either indicated or said, in effect, "Well, I guess that's right." But he said, "I certainly hope it

doesn't come out that way!" (Laughter) It was an interesting and important little point, I think, in the history of this thing.

I should mention one other episode in connection with the Dominican Republic, which I suppose was another illustration of this business about leakages and so on. It shows one of the odd, but I guess typical personal problems of working with President Johnson. That was the matter of getting Tap [William Tapley] Bennett off to Lisbon. It had become clear months before that Tap Bennett should be moved--given the way in which the whole Dominican thing had developed. But [J. William] Fulbright had made a rather vicious personal attack on Bennett in his famous speech the previous fall. And then the press, somehow or other, had gotten the word that Bennett was to be named ambassador to Portugal. I don't know how that leak took place, but maybe someone--

M: Maybe the same way!

G: --like mine, or maybe through somebody in the Foreign Relations Committee. You never know with these things. Bunker was very anxious that the move be made, because he wanted to get Crimmins' position regularized. Crimmins was to be charge [d'affaires] until the election took place and Balaguer was inaugurated, and then he was to move on up and be ambassador. But it was rather embarrassing for Tap Bennett himself, who was not happy about the situation since he knew he was a lame duck. It was not happy for Bunker; it was not happy for Crimmins. And it was getting embarrassing, because some people in the Dominican Republic would keep seeking out Bennett, and Bennett never quite knew what to say to them.

I think fairly early after my return from Brazil--probably in March, Ellsworth Bunker came back from one of these visits to Santo Domingo and said, "Look, we must go to the President and get him to move on Bennett." What had happened over the previous weeks was that every time Johnson was finally about to move, some column would appear in one of the newspapers that would say, "Everybody who was in the embassy staff at the time of the crisis has now been removed except for the ambassador, Bennett, and he is about to be moved." Sometimes they would say to Portugal, sometimes . . . . And every time that would happen, Johnson would dig in his heels and say, "Goddamn it, I'm not going to--"

M: Not going to go.

G: "I'm not going to . . . ." Yes, he's going to stay! (Laughter) Yes. So we did have one conversation about this particular thing. I must say, the President was very good. He said, "He's an awfully good man; and he's been abused by Fulbright, and he's been abused by the press. I just hate to do anything that suggests that I am sensitive to that abuse, because it is thoroughly undeserved." But he said, "I see what you mean, and I'll move." And he did move fairly promptly on that. That, as I say, was probably March.

The May episode I recall very vividly. Well, of course, the election did come out all right. The President was very happy.

M: Made you look good!

G: Yes. Later on, I went along with Hubert Humphrey, and Senator [Bourke] Hickenlooper I think was in the party, and the congressman from New Orleans--what's his name, Boggs?--Hale Boggs, and a couple of others to represent us on inauguration day, which was July 1, 1966.

M: How badly had that whole episode hurt us, as you got to be intimately involved with the general Latin American relations? Was there much hangover, a year later from that, around?

G: Well, I would say not vast. We had many Inter-American activities and lots of opportunities to feel the atmosphere. Until the Dominican election itself, it was a tremendously sore point. When the election came out the way it did, and when Balaguer was peacefully inaugurated, and things seemed to be getting back to some kind of--in Dominican terms, "stable" basis--I would say that in most countries . . . . Now, in left-wing groups, of course, it was constantly referred to and still is. Indeed, I find it in student discussions here to this very day and elsewhere in the country. It's always cited. People talking about what they think is our black record in Latin America usually will cite Guatemala, 1954, Dominican Republic, 1965, [and] Bay of Pigs, 1961. A few of them will also throw in Brazil, 1964.

M: When you're there, anyway.

G: That's right. I always say to them, as I have said in print, that whatever the merits of what was done in the Dominican Republic in April, certainly the end product was an election that everybody agreed was a fair one. It seems to me that's a better way for regimes to be determined than by street fighting in the capital or by mobs. That view doesn't necessarily legitimize unilateral interventions. It's perfectly clear that the intervention was contrary to the OAS charter.

M: How did it compare say to--there's always the equal charge that the Vietnam fallout was so bad in Latin America. Was it worse than the Dominican Republic fallout, or equal to [it]?

G: Oh, the Dominican Republic, much more. The fact is that until about late 1966, when our own preoccupation with Vietnam was becoming so clear to Latin Americans, Vietnam was just awfully remote. There wasn't a great deal of coverage of it in the press. In fact, in Montevideo in the spring of 1967, I was representing us in the meeting preparing for the presidential meeting at Punta del Este. There was a complicated affair involving a congressional resolution, and at one point a number of Latins were expressing disappointment at the scale of additional aid for Latin America that the President was

suggesting. I arranged a closed meeting of the heads of delegation, and made them a quite strong speech about it being something of a miracle that, given the preoccupation with Vietnam, the President was prepared to ask for anything more for anywhere else, and this was a real sign of his devotion to the Latin American cause. The point sunk home. But this was against a background of a fairly general ignorance in Latin America, at that time, of how important Vietnam was, and what it all meant, and so on.

M: So it didn't become a big issue there like it did here in 1965 or 1966?

G: Oh, no. There was a great time lag. Since then it has, but that is another couple of years. I would say that it began to do so during the course of 1966 and 1967. But it was a couple of years after it had done so in the United States, and [was] largely a reflection of what was happening inside the United States. But the Dominican thing, of course, was very much in their own back yard and very much a matter of concentrated interest all over the hemisphere.

Well, that was one subject. Another subject that brought us together personally, on a number of occasions, was ambassadorial appointments. A third, of course, was the question of his own travels. He had the idea, several times, of trips to Latin America. None of them came off, except for Mexico and the presidential meeting at Punta del Este. Because Walt had a great deal of interest himself in Latin America, because of his work with CIAP [Inter-American Committee of the Alliance for Progress]--you remember he was on . . . .

M: He was the American representative there.

G: I think, from time to time, he suggested that the President . . . . The President, of course, was a very restless man, liked to travel, and kept talking about where he might travel, and so on. We actually had one trip planned out in very considerable detail. That must have been in about August 1966; it was before the presidential meeting idea developed. Yes, that's about right. August.

I remember very well the day we were sitting in the President's office discussing it, because it was a couple of months after the coup in Argentina, which was late June of 1966. We were discussing what the itinerary might be, and it did not include Argentina. This raised various questions: what countries would be in and which would be out. I said, "Mr. President, this is a terribly difficult problem. I think, from the domestic point of view, and the general Latin American point of view, it would be impossible for you to go to Argentina at this time. And yet, if you leave them out, it obviously is a slight." We'd done some weeks of rather detailed planning and gotten down to the point of--I think an advance party might even have gone to some of these places.

M: Really?

G: I don't recall the precise degree of detail, but certainly there had been a lot of work going into it. He looked up at me and he said, "You know, I think we'd better cancel the whole idea. I saw some pictures in the papers a couple of days ago of the Argentine cops beating some students and professors over the head, and I agree with you [that] I can't go under the circumstances. But I'm not going to slight any major country in Latin America. It's one thing for me not to go to Haiti, or even to Paraguay, but Argentina . . . ."

M: You can't leave out Argentina.

G: That's right.

M: The idea for the presidential meeting that became Punta del Este had been suggested by the Argentine President, hadn't it? [Arturo] Illia?

G: Yes.

M: Before he was overthrown?

G: Oh, I've got the dates wrong. This must have been . . . now wait a minute.

G: I thought that was where the idea came from.

G: You're perfectly right. I'm trying to get the dates straight now. Yes, yes, yes. The presidential meeting idea was already there, of course. The sequence was this: in March of 1966, there was a meeting in Buenos Aires of the Inter-American Economic and Social Council, where I represented the United States.

M; Right.

G: That was the meeting at which Illia promoted this idea.

M: Did he promote that at our suggestion or of his own?

G: No, sir! There was no advance consultation with anybody. It was a matter of great embarrassment, how in the world one should react to the proposal. I sent a hurried telegram home and consulted with the very nice Chilean, now their ambassador in Washington, Domingo Santa Maria, who was the head of their delegation, and various others. We had a closed meeting of heads of delegation, and all agreed on a kind of temporizing action, indicating that the idea was good in principle and requesting the Secretary General of the OAS to explore its practicality, what the agenda might be, and where and when it might take place. It was the best we could do.

M: Good temporizing response.

G: So the proposal was not only not at our suggestion. It came as a total surprise to us and, as far as I know, to every other delegation there, except the Chileans. Because, apparently, the notion had come up originally in a meeting between Illia and Chilean President [Eduardo] Frei [Montalva]. They had met about a month before our Buenos Aires meeting, I think in February on the Chilean-Argentine border somewhere. They had a very friendly meeting. Apparently they had talked some about the possibility of a hemisphere-wide presidential meeting. I'm not sure the idea didn't originate with Frei, but I don't quite know.

M: Yes. But at least it didn't originate with us. You're confident of that?

G: Absolutely. I talked with Illia before I left that time, after the meetings were all over. We had a very cordial conversation. It was clear that one reason Illia wanted it was the hope that having such a meeting scheduled would keep him in office, because in Argentina at that time, the newspapers were openly talking about threats of a golpe [coup] against the President. [Juan Carlos] Ongania wasn't, I must say in fairness to him, but lots of his friends were talking about how the regime had to be thrown out.

M: Then once Illia got overthrown, how did the idea finally work its way up into some kind of active . . . ?

G: Well, what happened was that before he was overthrown, we in Washington--this is mainly Walt Rostow and I--concluded that it was a good idea. We therefore promoted it with the President, and he agreed it was a good idea. He liked the idea. It fit, I think temperamentally, with his feelings about personal diplomacy. So he endorsed it publicly in his Mexican speech, which was in April of 1966.

M: So it didn't take long.

G: No, it was about a month or six weeks. We suggested a few ideas as to what the agenda might be, in very general terms. That was April, 1966. Then in June, Illia was removed anyway. That put to bed, for a while at least, any notion of an early presidential meeting. That was when, as an alternative, at least in the short run, this notion of a presidential trip was thought about. So that was another typical kind of subject for personal meetings between me and the President: ambassadorial appointments, the question of his own travel. Then on a number of occasions--because I was always over to present new Latin American ambassadors--he would ask after a Presidential ceremony that I stay behind and chat with him a while and [he'd] ask me how things were going. I'd give him a general feel of what the critical problems were in Latin America and so on.

M: No problems of access though?

G: No.

M: Whenever you needed or wanted an audience, you could get one?

G: Oh, yes. I didn't ask for a great many, but I felt perfectly at ease on this. Of course, I always kept Dean Rusk informed about these. But in most cases, except when we were planning for the foreign ministers meetings and the presidential meeting itself, Dean had no particular desire to be directly involved. At least, [he] didn't show it to me. That may reflect some difference in status, de facto, between assistant secretaries of state. Maybe this shows the justice of Berle's original idea. But I think it's rather a reflection of the fact that, by and large, Latin America is not a top priority area of American foreign concern.

M: In spite of the rhetoric to the contrary.

G: Sure, but it's clear, from the basic security point of view, that the Soviet Union, China, Western Europe in general, and Southeast Asia, very much in particular in the last several years, have been the critical points of concentration. Therefore, if you have a reasonably strong-minded assistant secretary--as I think I was, Tom Mann was, Ed Martin was in his time--that's probably less true of either Jack Vaughn or Bob Woodward--he was pretty much given his head. Now sometimes I'd have a particular difference with another agency, particularly with the Treasury. The Treasury, of course, was getting more and more concerned about the balance of payments. They were developing some terribly difficult policy lines on restrictions on loans and requirements for so-called additionality.

M: Yes, yes.

G: This has just been lifted, I noticed, by President Nixon. Which is a good thing, but unfortunately, about three years later than it should have been. While Joe [Henry H.] Fowler and I were intimate personal friends--we'd worked together on the War Production Board during the war, so we'd known each other for twenty-five years--on these official issues, we were constantly at odds. On a couple of them--and here, since they were formal matters, I always went through the Secretary of State--we appealed over his head to the President. This would occasionally require a first-hand discussion with the President.

M: Would the President have a tendency to favor their point of view as against the State Department?

G: No, on these that we brought to a head, he invariably decided on our side.

M: Oh.

G: Invariably.

M: That's contrary to what I . . . .

G: When they were specific. If they were general, he was inclined not to act. But if it was a specific case . . . . There was one on whether there should be an Inter-American Bank

loan for Haiti. That didn't involve the balance of payments, but [it] involved Inter-American Bank policy and national policy. There, essentially, the President said, "Well, this is a political matter. Secretary Rusk and Gordon have got the political responsibility. They think this is the thing to do. I'll back them up."

M: What about the White House national security people, the Rostows . . . ?

G: Yes, Rostow was very active in all of these things.

M: Going around the State Department sometimes?

G: Not in the Latin American field, no, no. We never had . . . . I never had any trouble. Of course again, this may be partly because of personal relationships. Walt Rostow and I were fellow professors in Cambridge, Massachusetts. We've known each other for a great many years. He was a Rhodes scholar too, a little after me. He's a few years younger.

M: It's interesting how important the personal thing is.

G: Yes.

M: You knew everybody, just about. And you can tell that it makes a difference.

G: Yes, that's right. It helps. And under Rostow, on Latin America, there was Bill Bowdler; a wonderful fellow, who's now abroad, very bright, who for all practical purposes was part of my staff. We were together all the time. He and Bob Sayre and I would talk about all kinds of things. Sayre had previously been doing Latin American work in the White House, and Tom Mann asked for him to come over as deputy assistant secretary. Bowdler is a very bright foreign service officer. I think he's been assigned now as either ambassador in a very small country or deputy chief of mission in a larger one, and I've forgotten which.

M: But there were no strains or tensions between his shop and yours?

G: No, no. The one thing on which Walt Rostow and I really had some falling out was the last thing he did as head of the Policy Planning Staff, a report on development of the "inner frontiers" of South America and their physical development.

M: Physical integration and things.

G: Yes. Well, I was all in favor of physical integration. But I thought this particular report was wildly romantic and greatly overdid the importance of the inner frontier idea. Walt had gotten his enthusiasm partly from [Fernando] Belaunde [Terry], who was then president of Peru. Walter Lippmann had picked up the idea on some trip in South America, and given it a lot of publicity. I thought it was being blown up totally out of

perspective. So I sat on the report for a while and then wrote a rather critical memorandum greatly playing down its importance. I know Walt was very disappointed about this, but he didn't press. He said, "Look, you've got the responsibility. You're supposed to be making Latin American policy. I'm not going to fight about it." That was generally the attitude.

On the Treasury business, there was a constant kind of rear guard action, and we only picked a few of the most critical things to appeal. I'd often go over to the Treasury and nag Fowler. But I did have some advantage. In fact, Covey Oliver, my successor, later expressed some envy on this point. He had not known Fowler personally. He was perhaps a little more wedded to protocol than I was, and didn't think it was proper for him as an assistant secretary to be going directly to the secretary of the treasury. So he would try to work things out with the assistant secretary of the treasury. Well, that was impossible. You never got anything worked out that way. Whereas I was both brash and prepared to play on these long-standing personal acquaintances. Also, I took seriously a remark that President Kennedy had once made way back around 1962, even though there was some exaggeration in it. He had said publicly that the geographical assistant secretaries of state, if they do their job properly, de facto, are as important as most cabinet officers.

M: In their area, they're the responsible one.

G: So when I had agricultural business, I went to Secretary [Orville] Freeman. He was one I had not known before. We developed a very happy personal relationship, very satisfactory. We had a lot of problems on exports of agricultural surpluses. Of the outside departments, Treasury was overwhelmingly the most important, and also Commerce, on the problem of imports to the United States, especially textile quotas. But Tony Solomon handled most of those. Sometimes he and I would go together. The two of us also had an extremely effective working relationship. Sugar quotas were another very tough problem.

M: As an economist, too, you were able to deal with these problems perhaps better than a career foreign service officer, who was kind of an amateur--

G: It may have helped.

M: --economist, might have been able to do.

G: Right. It may have helped in some of the cases. Anyway, [to] come back to the President, the other major contacts had to do with the development of the preparations for the presidential meeting.

M: Right. Why don't you just run that down.

G: The origins of that were the Illia initiative in March of 1966; followed by our decision in Washington to back it up as expressed by the President in April, 1966, in Mexico City. Then I was charged, in effect, by the President to organize the American position and work this up.

So we set up a little task force within the State Department with some help from other agencies. We detached Sam Eaton from his other duties and asked him to be the full-time staff officer. About this time, we also persuaded Sol Linowitz to join the government as ambassador to the OAS. One of his main jobs was to work on the presidential meeting, because the OAS was to be the organization through which the arrangements would be made. CIAP was supposed to have a lot to do with it, too.

So a great deal of time was given during the summer months of 1966 to developing a position, and from time to time there were critical points. We would check with the President as to whether he thought a particular idea would float or not. Dean Rusk took a very keen interest in these preparations, as distinct from the other Latin American subjects. He would normally be with me, or I would be with him, I guess is the way to put it, when we called on the President. This was partly because he was interested [and] partly because one of the key intermediary steps, as things worked out, was the foreign ministers conference in Buenos Aires in January of 1967.

We'd originally hoped, actually, that the presidential meeting could take place in the fall of 1966, but that slipped, first, because of the Argentine coup, which threw everything for a loop. In fact, that also delayed the next foreign ministers meeting, which was supposed to take place in Buenos Aires in August of 1967, but the situation hadn't calmed down enough yet. There was still a sense of shock from the coup, and the Venezuelan attitude about coups, and whether or not the new regime should be recognized, and so on . . . . So we couldn't hold an OAS formal, high level meeting in Argentina. On the other hand, the Argentines said if we held it anywhere else, that would be a serious insult and so on. They obviously wouldn't attend anywhere else.

So time passed. And also the preparations did not go well. We didn't really get a good international machinery of preparation. We tried to use the OAS Council. It turned out that that group really was not suited to the preparatory job, partly because they're mainly pettifogging lawyers with very little personal understanding of the economic problems which clearly were going to be the heart of the agenda, and partly because their procedures are terribly complicated and very slow-operating. So a lot of spinning of gears took place during the course of the summer.

M: Any real national reluctance to the holding of the meetings that had to be overcome by . . . ?

G: Well, the president of Mexico was very skeptical at the beginning, Diaz Ordaz. A number of presidents--I think Leoni of Venezuela also said, "Look, the last time the presidents met was in Panama with President Eisenhower, and very little positive came

out of that. We don't want just another ceremonial meeting." But this, of course, fit with President Johnson's own view. He didn't want just a ceremonial meeting either. Walt Rostow and I also didn't want just a ceremonial meeting.

M: Did he have to intervene with any of these skeptics, personally, do you know?

G: No, no. I guess Johnson talked with Diaz Ordaz about it before he made his public announcement, and at that point Diaz Ordaz's reaction was, "This is all right if something concrete will be accomplished. But let's make sure that there's adequate preparation in advance and [make] something concrete, and take the necessary time." That was basically the stance that both Diaz Ordaz and Carrillo Flores, the Mexican foreign minister, took. Carrillo Flores, incidentally, is one of the outstanding foreign ministers of the day. [He] still is foreign minister--a man of very great ability and a natural leader among the Latin American foreign ministers in every respect.

Frei, on the other hand, was very keen about the idea of a presidential meeting, particularly if it could focus on integration in Latin America. When I met Frei for the first time on an official visit in June of 1966, we had a long lunch, followed by a whole afternoon of discussion. I think it was a Saturday. It was down at Vina del Mar. Frei was most cordial; I enjoyed it no end. I was very much impressed with him. We talked mainly about these problems of integration in Latin America. He said, with respect to integration, "You know this is something I feel deeply about. A year or so ago, I thought that with enough dramatic push, Latin Americans could do it on their own. But I'm now satisfied that it's not going to happen unless there is a really sympathetic and rather active interest shown by the United States." He felt that a push by the U.S. was indispensable, not just passing acquiescence, but a really active interest. I was all in favor of it, anyway, and had become convinced that this ought to be the kind of centerpiece, or central theme, of the presidential meeting.

We'd aimed originally at the fall. We finally decided that the machinery was going rather slowly, and we had a couple of informal meetings of the foreign ministers, who all happened to be in New York for the opening of the General Assembly. This was in September. At that point we reached three conclusions: first, that the meeting was a good idea; secondly, that we had to speed up and improve the machinery for preparation for it; thirdly, that it almost certainly couldn't take place until early 1967. Because the foreign ministers meeting, in B.A. [Buenos Aires] by this time, was scheduled. The feelings about Argentina were beginning to soften, and this was the next step.

Well, we worked all fall. We finally got a good mechanism, in the form of a committee of Latin American international figures. They were four: Prebisch, who came back from his Geneva job just to help out on this--by this time he'd left ECLA and was secretary general of the UNCTAD [United Nations Conference on Trade and Development]; Herrera of the Inter-American Bank; Carlos Sanz de Santa Maria, the president of CIAP, chairman of CIAP; and [Jose Antonio] Mora, the secretary general of the OAS, whose contribution was relatively small, because he's not strong on the

economic side. But he was helpful. They produced a rather long, joint report. That, then, went to the OAS committee on the thing, but they were kind of floundering.

Then in December, we were sitting around my office one night with Sol Linowitz and Sam Eaton and Bob Sayre and the others who had been working on all this, wondering how in the world to get the thing off the dime. In a fit of inspiration, I said, "Let's produce a document we'll call an annotated agenda. All the ideas on it will be drawn from this report of the four Latin Americans, but we'll put it in a form that might be made into a presidential document, an outline, a kind of annotated table of contents." So we worked one up in the next two or three days. It was four or five pages long. Sol Linowitz took it over--it was getting close to Christmas then--to an OAS Council meeting.

He came back late that evening and said, "It was just like magic. These fellows have been floundering around now for so many months that anything, anything, that really looks like a way out . . . ." No, it wasn't Christmas, it was November. This was before he and I set off on our long trip to Latin America. But it was the first real ray of light in the OAS Council arrangements. I think it had a major effect in predisposing the Latins in favor of the meeting.

By this time the U.S. Government was very much committed, and President Johnson personally was very much committed. He'd mentioned it again in a speech in August, which was the anniversary of the Charter of Punta del Este. In that speech in late August of 1966, which I largely drafted, he indicated in more detail the kinds of things he thought might emerge from a presidential meeting.

Around this time, some day in November, there was another meeting with Diaz Ordaz on the frontier. This was a joint inspection of the Amistad Dam. I was in the party, as Sol Linowitz was. [The] President and Diaz Ordaz called me over to join them and [Diaz Ordaz] said, "May we talk further about the presidential meeting idea?" The Mexican president said he had gone through a rather long, skeptical period, but he was beginning to think that the idea had some positive content.

By this time, Sol Linowitz and I had conceived of an exploration on Johnson's behalf, first-hand, with the presidents of principal countries. Johnson said, "You and Sol are going on these two trips." Sol was to go up the West Coast of South America. I was to go up the East Coast.

M: You weren't going to travel together, right?

G: No, we met together in B.A., and then we separated. Then we were going to meet again. He said, "I want the two of you, toward the end, as the last stop in your trip, to meet in Mexico City with President Diaz Ordaz. Tell him everything you've learned, get his advice, and report it back to me." That was fine.

By this time we'd worked out, in quite a lot of detail, what we thought the meeting's conclusions ought to be and what the U.S. positions should be. At this point we had some rather frictional issues with the secretary of the Treasury. We sat down with the President on these. He decided in our favor, subject to our ability to get congressional support later on. But the first step was to see whether the Latin American presidents really wanted to meet or not, and if so, when or where. The location issue was getting involved here, too. The Peruvians had put in a bid for Lima. The Ecuadorians were saying, because of their long-standing, angry quarrel, that they wouldn't go to Peru. The Chileans had offered Vina del Mar. The Bolivians were saying they wouldn't go to Chile. The Uruguayans, with a certain amount of prodding, because they were having all kinds of political and economic crises and were about to change presidents, too, peacefully, but it was a moment of transition, were offering Punta del Este.

M: Nobody's mad at Uruguay.

G: Nobody's mad at Uruguay. They were saying, "We've got enough on our hands without trying to be host to a presidential meeting, too. But if it's in the interest of the hemisphere, and so on, we'd be willing to do it." So that was an issue, and the timing, of course, was still something of an issue.

So Sol and I set forth. He went to Central America first. I had some business in Europe--fulfilling long-standing dates to try to persuade the British and Germans to pay more attention to Latin America. So it was arranged that he would go to Central America. I would go to Europe. We would meet together in Buenos Aires and compare notes. Then he would go to Chile and--I don't think he stopped in Bolivia--Peru and Colombia. I would talk to Ongania in Argentina and go on up to Brazil and Venezuela. Then we would meet together in Panama, and go together to Mexico City and talk with Diaz Ordaz as President Johnson had promised. Then we would go to the LBJ Ranch and report to President Johnson. And we did all that.

It was a very exhausting trip, particularly for me, because I had to cross the Atlantic twice as well as doing all this traveling in Latin America. But about the middle of December we finished. When we got together in Panama, it was fascinating to see--although we'd each been talking to quite different kinds of presidents--basically how much the views coincided and how far this annotated agenda idea of ours had really won the cause, so to speak.

In Mexico we had a long meeting with the key members of the cabinet before we saw Diaz Ordaz. Carrillo Flores was in favor, somewhat in favor. Some of the economic members were very skeptical, until we mentioned the possibility that one of the things that would be opened up was a change in basic American trade policy to encourage, to give some discriminatory treatment in favor of exports of manufactured products from underdeveloped countries to advanced countries. That was of great interest to the Mexican Commerce Minister, who up until that time had been very skeptical. He's a

strong believer in trade, not aid. Because Mexico gets no substantial aid anyway, that's understandable.

Sol and I then flew up to Texas together. The theory was that we were to go to San Antonio and check in at the St. Anthony Hotel and then telephone [Jake] Jacobsen at the Texas White House, the Ranch, and see what we should do from then on. We did that. We arrived about five-thirty, [and] telephoned. I got Jake. And he said, "There's something very odd happened here. I don't really understand it." Neither did Sol. He said, "Well, it's pretty late now. You'd better spend the night, and we'll arrange to have a helicopter take you out here in the morning." We were a little disappointed. We'd expected that the President would want to see us that evening and we'd spend the night at the Ranch and so on. But no definite plans were made. So we said, "All right." We were both tired. We asked some advice on restaurants in San Antonio, and went off to a German restaurant and had a German meal . . . .

M: Lots of Germans in that country. People don't know that.

G: That's right . . . and got back, in a very leisurely way. It was a warm evening for December. We strolled around for a while, and I guess, got back to the hotel about nine o'clock, and found an urgent message: "Call the Ranch right away."

We called up, got Jacobsen again. He said, "Oh, there's been some terrible mistake. President and Mrs. Johnson wanted you to come to dinner." I said, "Well, we've missed that." He said, "Are you too tired to come now if we send a helicopter right away?" So we said, "No, we'd be delighted." Well, we packed up and checked out of the hotel, apologized to them for not having spent a night, [and] got a taxi out to the airport. We arrived at the Ranch, I guess, about half past ten. As we were settling down on the pad--I guess this was an old habit of the President's, but it was new to me--there was a car and a fellow in the driver's seat with a red hat--I couldn't make out who it was--sitting there waiting for us. We got out, and who should be driving the car but the President of the United States!

M: One of his famous driving excursions?

G: He didn't take us on a trip that night. He took us over to the Ranch house and showed us around with great paternal pride. I'd never been there before. Sol had once.

Then we sat down. He asked us to report. We reported, and he said, "Well, this is very interesting. We ought to have a stroll. Let's walk." He picked up a couple of his secretaries, and the five of us went walking out in the road there and kept talking about this thing.

We came back and sat down again. I was getting dog-tired by this time. I guess Sol was really tired, too. But by about half past twelve, he said, "Well, it's perfectly clear. We'll arrange a press conference for the two of you tomorrow. Say you've

completed this trip, summarize the results, say that it's perfectly clear that everybody wants to meet, probably in April. The place will be determined by the foreign ministers. The details generally will be determined by the foreign ministers. But it's clear that all signals are green," so to speak, and so on.

I thought that was fine and that it was time to go to bed. But no, not for LBJ. He wanted to stay up and talk, and by God, we stayed up until about two o'clock or two-thirty. I could scarcely keep my eyes open. It was absolutely fascinating. It included chatting with him while he was being massaged by a Navy petty officer. And he talked about everything.

M: He talked, and you listened.

G: He talked, and we listened. That was basically it, yes. Somebody had just published a story about the episodes at the moment of the assassination, and he was very sore about that. He wanted to talk about that for a while. I can't remember whose story it was, but something had come out at the time. It wasn't the--maybe it was the book . . . .

M: The Manchester book came out the end of that year, I think, or roughly then.

G: It may have been the Manchester book, or some pre-leaks about what was going to be in the Manchester book.

M: Some of it was published prior to its release, right.

G: That's right. That's very likely what it was. Well, that must have been half an hour. Then we talked about politics, and we talked about the poverty program. I got the impression . . . .

The next morning, we were up bright and early, and he took us out for a drive. That was in the station wagon, with the deer, and all the rest of it, to show us the Ranch by daylight before we went off to our press conference and came home to Washington. He was in marvelous spirits, I must say, both that night and the following morning. He was full of enthusiasm about this presidential meeting and the results of our trip. He asked us all kinds of questions, and wanted to know about the personalities of each of these presidents he hadn't met. He was very much interested in that.

M: You didn't see him burdened or overcome with concern for Vietnam during that monologue, during the night hours particularly?

G: No.

M: That's interesting. That was a fairly critical time in Vietnam developments, too.

G: Yes, that's right. That was the end of 1966. That's quite right. When I began to sense his preoccupation with Vietnam was more in the early months of 1967. Well, I must have begun to sense it some then, but whether it was as much from the President personally, or just the general atmosphere in Washington, I don't know. It was a critical factor in my hesitation about whether to accept this job.

There was a coincidence in timing here. The next day we had our press conference in the morning, and then we flew back to Washington. I hadn't seen my wife for about three weeks then, between the European trip and the Latin trip and the Ranch. She told me that, a couple of nights before, a man who didn't identify himself and turned out to be Mr. Garland, the then-chairman of the board of the [Johns] Hopkins trustees, had telephoned, trying to get hold of me. [He] didn't say what it was about, just wanted to know when I'd be back and so on. The next day he telephoned and asked whether I'd be willing to talk with him and a couple of his colleagues about the presidency of Johns Hopkins.

That developed rather rapidly over the Christmas and New Year holiday. And in thinking about it--I'd of course been in office, then, as assistant secretary only for a year--I felt embarrassed by the notion of leaving so soon. I told Mr. Garland that, from that point of view, I would have been much happier to be asked a year later rather than at that particular point in time.

But I came to the conclusion, in thinking about it, that unless the Vietnam thing got resolved--and there was no sign whatever, at that time, that it would be, in the short run--the best we could hope to do in Latin American policy was to reach a kind of a peak with the presidential meeting--which I was going to stay for anyway--and then it would be a holding operation. I wasn't particularly interested in presiding over a holding operation. So I didn't feel quite so guilty about resigning. I had a somewhat bad conscience, because this job had the reputation . . . .

M: Oh, boy! It's got the worst one in town. That and the director of AID are the two worst jobs in Washington.

G: But, no, I certainly don't recall Johnson talking about Vietnam at the Ranch that night. I didn't make any notes at the time. If I'd had a greater historical sense, that's what I would have done. But you can imagine what happened: (a) I was dog-tired; (b) when I got back to the office, there was a great accumulation of papers. I just plunged into the next stage of preparations for the meeting, plus a lot of routine business which had accumulated. It was budget time, with all that kind of routine, too. There were a lot of problems of that kind.

Over the months that followed, of course, Dean Rusk and I had many meetings with the President. First, they were on policy for the foreign ministers meeting in Buenos Aires in February. We came back from that with an agreement by the foreign ministers that the presidential meeting would take place on a specific date in April in Punta del

Este. The agenda would follow the outline that had been developed at Buenos Aires, with a further coordinating group in Montevideo, where I was to represent us, to meet for another couple of weeks just before Easter. Clearly, the time had come to define precisely what the United States was prepared to do, including what it was prepared to do financially. We had a great stack of position papers and summaries of them available for the President.

There was a meeting in the Cabinet Room in . . . . Well, it was between the end of the foreign ministers meeting and my going off to Montevideo. That was not a terribly long time, because I had agreed on the way back from Buenos Aires to stop in both Bolivia and Ecuador--which were the two countries that Sol and I had missed on our previous trip--to see the two presidents there. So this must have been early March.

M: You say the President did make his request to Congress, I think--March is what sticks in my mind. [March 13, 1967]

G: That's right. This meeting must have been about March 4 or 5, or somewhere in there, the first week in March, because the foreign ministers meeting didn't end until late February. I was back in Montevideo by the time that took place. Here, the calendar shows a consultation with Senator Russell Long, Senator Holland, and Senator Smathers--this was after the decision had been made.

M: You're lining up support there.

G: That's right. Well, here, I was in Ecuador on March 2. I wonder whether this decision was made before the foreign ministers meeting?

M: This is on the additional aid question.

G: Yes, that's right, and what our line should be. Let's see . . . . I think this was it: White House, February 11, Saturday, February 11. It was just before we went off to B.A. That's right. It was to give us guidance. That's right, it comes back to me now. He said, "Look, if the foreign ministers all agree on all of this, and you then know what the thing is, draft a congressional resolution and sell it."

M: Not only draft it, but sell it, too, huh?

G: That's right, that's exactly right. I remember now that we drafted something right away. We went over the draft, at various points, within our delegation in B.A., and refined it and improved on it. Then by the time I got back . . . . I left B.A. for Lima on the twenty-eighth of February. I was in La Paz on March 1; Quito on March 2 and March 3; Bogotá on March 4; and back in Washington on the afternoon of Saturday, March 4. Then I got together with Sol Linowitz, who had already been doing salesmanship in a week of consultations. In fact, we had that job of consultations spread all over the place. Bill [William B.] Macomber had some of them. Then I got assigned a bunch of them.

Well, that was what led to this incredible business--when did it take place?--this awful meeting with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. At first, everything seemed to be going very well. The President hadn't floated the text of a resolution publicly yet. We were selling the idea. We had a text, and we showed it to the various people we consulted. And we all got together, then, at the White House on March 10. That was a big meeting at the White House with about thirty or forty congressional leaders. It looked as if they all bought the proposal, to a man. I remember Bill [William S.] Gaud saying to me as we left that meeting together, "You fellows working on Latin America are absolute miracle workers. I wish I could do this for the rest of the AID program. How do you do it?" and so on.

Then the next day, Saturday, March 11, I left for Montevideo at night. During the course of that day, I talked with Armisted Selden and his Republican counterpart, Bill Mailliard--who were the two Latin American subcommittee leaders on the House side--[and] agreed to some minor changes in the text of the resolution, which they were suggesting. So I went off to Montevideo pretty confident that . . . .

M: Thought everything was in line.

G: That's right. Well, the Montevideo thing took two weeks, and it was a very grueling affair. As to the Congressional resolution, things went reasonably well in the House. There were some modifications; then the resolution was passed by about a two-to-one vote. But then it got caught in the Senate in the crack of Fulbright's attitudes about the Vietnam war, and the Tonkin Gulf Resolution, and any kind of new resolution of support for the President. Fulbright stalled it off so that it would not be considered before the Easter recess.

I got back from Montevideo on the Saturday between Good Friday and Easter Sunday--that was Saturday, March 25, at six a.m., I see here--traveling in a heavy military cargo plane. I'd agreed to spend Monday here in Baltimore, in connection with some [Johns] Hopkins things, because, by this time, my job here was public knowledge. And on the twenty-eighth we got together again on the Congressional resolution. Here it says five-thirty with Secretary Rusk. No, that was about fisheries. That was another major problem we had going on. "Wednesday morning, March 29, meet with the President in the White House and CIAP." He had all the CIAP members in. Walt Rostow and I had a brief session with him in advance to talk about what he should say and so on. Congress was in recess that week.

The following weekend, the President had all the Latin American ambassadors out at the Ranch. That was rather pleasant, from the personal point of view. My wife and I had gotten into a State Department car on Friday afternoon, March 31, and we thought we were on our way out to Andrews Air Base. A radio message came in asking us to stop and telephone the White House. It was a message from the President saying

he'd prefer us to go by helicopter with him and Lady Bird and please would we meet him at the White House at six forty-five. It was easy to say yes.

M: Right. How does the President do in a party situation like that with foreigners?

G: Oh, absolutely marvelously.

M: He doesn't turn them off with his style, Texas . . . ?

G: Not that group. And he didn't overdo it. He wasn't dressed outrageously down at the Ranch. Much less so than Harry Truman would have been in similar circumstances. No, I would say, at least with this sizable group, that everybody was charmed and delighted, fascinated. It was, from that personal point of view, an extremely successful party.

I remember that about ten of the ambassadors and I were sitting around with the President talking about various things in the afternoon. You see, we all flew out together, and then we spent the night in San Antonio, while the President went on to the Ranch. The next morning we all visited the HemisFair grounds, and then we got into buses and went out to the Ranch together. There was a barbecue lunch, and then a rather nice historical pageant show. In the afternoon we were all sitting around in various groups. It happened that about a dozen of us were sitting in the garden of the Ranch with the President talking about various things. He was, if I recall rightly, rather soberly dressed; he probably had on an odd hat with a bandana, but was very dignified. There really were none of the antics that have, at least, been reported on occasion. Perhaps with individual guests, but not with this group. From comments that I heard on the way home afterwards, the whole thing made a tremendous hit.

M: He didn't hold it against you that you'd decided to leave by that time?

G: Oh, on that point, no. I guess I ought to fill in that part of the story. I had decided to accept the Johns Hopkins presidency over the Christmas and New Year period. I had telephoned only a few close friends for advice. January 2 was a holiday, which I spent here in Baltimore with Milton Eisenhower, my predecessor.

On Tuesday, January 3, 1967, 1 called Secretary Rusk and said I had a rather urgent personal matter I'd like to talk with him about. I wanted to talk to him before lunch, if possible, because I knew he had lunch at the White House. There were lunches every Tuesday on Vietnam. It happened that his calendar was clear at twelve o'clock, so he asked me to come up. He asked me how things were going on preparations for the presidential meeting, and I told him. But then I said, "What I really wanted to talk to you about was the fact that over this Christmas period I've been propositioned for the presidency of Johns Hopkins. I'm, on the whole, rather disposed to accept [it]." He hadn't looked up at me before then. He had a great stack of papers on his desk, and he was still half looking at them. Suddenly he looked up and smiled. He said, "Well, that settles one thing. I've had reporters telephoning me telling me that I'm going to be the

president of Johns Hopkins." (Laughter) We talked about the pros and cons of that job for a while, because he knows Hopkins very well. He had a lot of contacts here during his Rockefeller Foundation days.

M: He's done some work up here since he's been out of office, I think, hasn't he?

G: Well, that's in our Washington branch, yes. But at that time, his connections had been mainly through the Rockefeller Foundation, particularly with the Medical School, and to some extent other parts of the university. We talked about the pros and cons of college presidencies and the timing problems. I explained to him this feeling of mine about Latin American relationships becoming just a holding operation after the presidential meeting. I also said I wouldn't have picked the timing, but in many ways it was a now-or-never kind of thing, because I was about to reach fifty-four. When you get much older than that, people don't want to consider you for such jobs. Anyway, there are not very many that I would want to accept. I saw in Johns Hopkins the great advantage of proximity to Washington and its exceptional character as a small university of high quality.

He recognized that I had made up my mind, and then he said, "You know, the President isn't going to like this very much." I said, "Well, I've surmised that that might be the case, but . . . ." "In fact," Dean Rusk said, "he may be quite explosive on the subject." I said, "I hope he won't be too explosive. I would, of course, explain to him the same considerations I've just explained to you. I hope he will take a sympathetic view of it." Dean said, "Well, I'm about to have lunch over at the White House. Why don't I broach it to him? I'm sure he'll want to talk with you, and maybe I can soften the blow some."

That afternoon Dean Rusk telephoned. Of course, he double talked, because we always had our secretaries monitor official calls. He said, "You know that subject I was talking to you about this morning? The President took a rather more relaxed attitude than I had feared, and he'd like to talk to you in person. Please would you call . . . ." Who was his appointments secretary?

M: Marvin Watson, at that time?

G: Yes. "Call Marvin Watson and make a date." I said, "Fine, thank you very much." My staff was incredibly curious as to what this was all about. They learned a couple of weeks later.

So I called Marvin Watson, and the date came through two days later, on Thursday, the fifth. I went over, rather nervous. I had no idea what Johnson's mood or reaction might be. As it turned out, the President couldn't have been sweeter. He welcomed me and said something like this, "Dean Rusk told me the other day about your conversation with Hopkins. I just hate to see you go and leave this job. But I can see why it appeals to you. You know, if I had any qualifications, which I don't, and anybody were to offer me a job like that, if I weren't otherwise occupied, there's nothing more I'd

rather do myself," and he smiled. (Laughter) And he said, "I like to believe, and I do believe, that if I said to you that you must absolutely stay here, then you would stay. But I don't feel I have a right to do that. After all, I only ask soldiers to stay in Vietnam for one year. You've been working full-time here and in Brazil for the last . . . ." Let's see, by this time, it was six years and a fraction.

M: Actually, you'd been in that job longer than any of your immediate predecessors stayed.

G: That's right. That's right. I hadn't at the time, but I would by June. He said, "Obviously, you'll be here to see us through the presidential meeting at Punta del Este," which was all more or less agreed by that time. And he said, "I want you to start giving some thought right away to a successor. I'll need a lot of help from you on that. But I just don't think I ought to stand in your way." He also talked a little bit about a farewell party. That never materialized, but he really couldn't have been nicer about my decision to leave.

The next time I saw Dean Rusk--I guess I may have dropped in briefly in the afternoon to report to him--he said, "Well, you know, it's an interesting thing. The President telephoned me last night and said he wanted to talk a little bit about this." That was the night before, the Wednesday. "And he said he'd been thinking about it, and wondering whether he ought to try to resist and try to persuade you to postpone it and so on. But he finally concluded that it wouldn't be a fair thing to do. And he said, 'Well, if I'm going to agree to it I might as well agree to it as nicely as possible.'" (Laughter) And he certainly did, I must say. It couldn't have been a more gracious and friendly and very, very cordial kind of attitude. His true feelings I don't know. I don't think he welcomed my departure. I think he thought well of my work on the job, and he certainly disguised his negative feelings if he had any.

So from then on, my relations with Johnson mainly had to do with the Punta del Este presidential meeting. There was one major sore point. I never told the President directly how unhappy I was about it, but Dean Rusk knew it, and Walt Rostow knew it all right, and Sol Linowitz, who felt the same way. It had to do with that Senate resolution. During the Latin American party at the Ranch the last weekend of the congressional recess, the President and Walt Rostow and Dean Rusk and I talked--and I guess Sol Linowitz, too--about strategy in relation to the Senate and what we should do. After all, we were leaving for Punta del Este only . . . .

M: Right away, almost.

G: In fact, the Secretary and I were leaving on Thursday, April 6.

M: Just a week, then.

G: Yes, a short week. There was to be another foreign ministers meeting for a few days, and then the President was going to be joining us on April 12. So time was terribly short. And the President put in a few phone calls, among others to the senator from Montana.

M: Mansfield.

G: Mansfield, yes, Mike Mansfield, and a couple of others. He then said to Dean Rusk, "Well, I arranged for you and Sol and Linc to meet first thing Monday morning with Bill Fulbright and Wayne Morse, and as many of the members of the Foreign Relations committee as they can get together before the committee considers the thing. Do what you can." That Monday morning meeting of the Senate was a very unhappy affair. Rusk sat at one end of a long table and Fulbright at the other, and the two men glared at each other like moral enemies. It was really almost sort of Biblical.

M: Almost to the point of no communication.

G: Right. Neither of them could say anything without irritating the other, and some of us were in the middle. I was there with my boss; I couldn't say very much. Morse tried to be helpful. The man who tried to be most helpful, I think, was Sparkman, at least in softening this dialogue.

Fulbright asked Rusk some questions--which I would have answered straight, but Rusk didn't want to answer quite straight--about how we would feel about this, that, or the other kind of alternative resolution. I would have said that that wouldn't do at all, and tried to do some negotiating with him. Rusk didn't want to negotiate, and Fulbright didn't want to do anything for Rusk. It was just a terrible mess.

But we still thought that we'd taken a count and that Fulbright could be overriden, because we knew all the senators who'd been at the White House meeting ten days before, and we had a majority of the Foreign Relations Committee. The senators then all went off for their meeting, and it was suggested that Sol and I wait for a while, and Wayne Morse would come back and report to us what had happened. Sol stayed around for about an hour or so and got impatient, saying, "There is not much point in two of us staying." I had some work with me anyway. It must have been about noon. Wayne Morse came up shaking his head and saying, "I've never seen such a performance." He had the text of this horrible resolution, which really said absolutely nothing.

M: Hedged in.

G: Yes. And Morse said, "Ten to nine." I said, "How in the world did that happen?" He gave me the list. It included a lot of proxies on both sides. One of them was Gene McCarthy. McCarthy had been at the White House meeting. I had talked with McCarthy personally about our own draft resolution, and he had expressed warm support. He was out of town. He hadn't come back from Minnesota. I saw McCarthy two nights later at a dinner party at Harriman's house. This was the night before I left for Punta del Este. I said, "Where the hell were you on Monday morning?" We knew each other quite well. He said, "What happened Monday?" I said, "The Senate Foreign Relations Committee was peeing all over our resolution and doing it by a vote of ten to nine, and the ten

included your proxy." "Oh, my God," he said, "did Bill Fulbright vote my proxy that way?" And I said, "Yes, he sure did." McCarthy just shook his head as if this was something happening on another planet that was of no interest to him. That had some effect on my own feelings about McCarthy.

M: I can imagine so.

G: The Monday afternoon of the Senate committee action, Linowitz and I were called in to the White House--not by the President--but by Walt Rostow. The President had dictated to Walt the words that should be used in the background press conference, but without attribution. Those words included the famous statement, "This resolution is worse than none at all." Sol and I were dragged, not quite kicking and screaming, but feeling that way, into a background press session where Walt was the spokesman, and Walt read the text of the thing. The press supposed, naturally enough, that these words were really Sol's and mine, and Walt couldn't say whose words they were.

We construed the President's having instructed Walt to use these words to mean that he intended to go to battle on the floor of the Senate and do something about this. I talked to [Senator Bourke] Hickenlooper, who was strongly in support. Hickenlooper said, "I'm perfectly prepared to arrange to move a reconsideration." He said, "Ten to nine isn't much of a vote, and I think there were some funny things about some of the proxies. But I've got to get it from the White House." I tried, Bill Macomber tried, Sol Linowitz tried. The President wouldn't budge. He never lifted another finger.

M: And never explained why?

G: Never explained why. It's been a mystery to me. It had, in the short run, at least, a very souring kind of effect on my feelings about the President and this whole business. It seemed like an extraordinary, manipulative thing, which left several of us in an incredibly embarrassed position [and] which weakened his own stance in relation to Punta del Este. It was really quite mystifying. I still don't understand exactly what went on, whether he had taken a count of his own and come to the conclusion that the jig was up and the effort wasn't worth pursuing. If he had done that, it seemed to me, he never should have made this statement about "worse than none." Or perhaps it was part of his own special Fulbright-Johnson feud.

M: That's a big subject, I expect.

G: It may well have been. I don't know. But it rapidly became history. We had to go out and do the best we could. Down in Punta del Este, of course, I saw the President every day, all the time. I sat in on each of his meetings with the other presidents, bilateral meetings, except one I had to miss because of some other assignment he'd given me. That was a fascinating process, also. Except for Diaz Ordaz, there was not a single one of these men he'd ever met. The first meeting was with [Carlos] Lleras Restrepo, the rather new president of Colombia. Lleras Restrepo didn't make a very good impression.

For one thing, he talks in a whisper, and the President had some trouble hearing him. And it was a little bit too theoretical. He had some good ideas. I gather that the recent state visit to Nixon has gone very well. After he left, Johnson shook his head a little bit and said, "You fellows have been saying this is a great man, but I don't quite see why." Lleras Restrepo really hadn't put his best foot forward.

But the most interesting one was Belaunde of Peru. Belaunde, you may recall, had studied architecture at the University of Texas in Austin and had been there at exactly the same time as Lady Bird. He speaks quite good English. Belaunde had obviously thought a lot about his approach and decided he was going to start with this personal connection. Lleras also has quite good English, but he came in with an interpreter, and started speaking in Spanish. He later shifted to English. But Belaunde started right away in English, talking about Texas, and Austin, and Lady Bird, and so forth and so on. It was the second morning, I think; it was the first interview of that morning.

The President looked as if he hadn't slept--our President--as if he hadn't slept quite enough. Anyway, he didn't react to this at all. He just didn't pick up any of these personal references. In effect, at some point, he nudged Belaunde in the direction of business, saying, "What do you think about the agenda?" Belaunde then went off on some of his special interests; mainly physical integration in Latin America. He said, "I'm terribly disappointed. I think we ought to do something much more dramatic than this. After all, one of the most important things that ever happened in the Western Hemisphere was the Panama Canal. That really changed the face of things. We, the presidents, are getting together for the first time"--except for the Panama meeting--"in history." It's the second meeting of the Western Hemisphere presidents in history. "We ought to do something equally dramatic, you know, such as highways in the Andes and inner frontier projects, atomic energy applied to digging irrigation canals, and so forth, maybe damming up the Amazon." I think he'd become rather fascinated by some of the Hudson Institute Projects.

The President [Johnson] listened to this for a while, and then said, "Well, have you thought about the financial side of it?" "Well," Belaunde said, "financial problems are secondary!" When he went out--after the President had given him a lecture on budgetary problems in the United States--the President said to us, in effect, "He's been highly advertised by you fellows, too. That man not only has his head in the clouds, he's got his feet in the clouds, too." And basically, he was right.

The ones that he liked best were Frei of Chile, Leoni of Venezuela, and Costa e Silva of Brazil. [Arthur da] Costa e Silva, I think, mainly because of his sense of brotherhood about the Dominican affair, which was the main thing that they talked about. And, of course, Diaz Ordaz of Mexico, whom he already knew very well. In fact, their meeting was just a kind of old times happy session with virtually no business in it.

M: Mr. Johnson does make a pretty good personal diplomat? He doesn't exceed the instruction, so to speak? He masters the detail enough to keep out of trouble?

G: In those meetings, he never got into trouble, but he did miss a number of opportunities. In general, he spent a fair amount of the time on trivia, really avoiding taking up some of the business subjects that we had hoped he would. That was true in the Brazilian case; it was true in several others. The two most business-like sessions, actually, were Venezuela and Panama. That was because the counterparts, the other presidents, had some very specific things they wanted to talk about. In the case of Panama, it was the timetable for completing the negotiation of the treaties. That was very clear-cut. In the case of Venezuela, it was oil, quotas on oil, de-sulphurization of oil, and so forth. Leoni was very clear . . . .

M: Specific things to ask for?

G: Very specific things that they wanted to talk about.

On the Panamanian negotiations, the President went a little bit further than I thought we were ready for. It turned out all right. We got the treaties completed, although by then I was out of office, but Panamanian politics made it clear that they couldn't even be put up for ratification. That's another story. But those bilateral meetings didn't have as much substance to them as they might have.

Another very interesting meeting--or set of them--was with Arosemena. Arosemena was the young Ecuadorian president who refused to sign. He was the only one to denounce the working text as being inadequate. At the first formal meeting he said he wouldn't sign it in its present form. He had thought, I believe, that he was going to carry several of his Latin colleagues with him. He discovered the second day that nobody else would join him. In fact, he got some rather severe--for a presidential level--tongue lashings from his colleagues.

He asked for a second meeting with President Johnson. It was a long one--at which I was present--in which he, in effect, asked the President to try to help him find some way of crawling back off his limb, if he could just get a few words modified somewhere. The President listened to him and talked to him. He was very effective in that meeting.

He finally said to Arosemena, "Look, Mr. President, "--in effect--"your problem isn't really with us. I would be quite prepared to accept some modification of the words, if you can get some of your key Latin American associates to agree. You get the President of Mexico, the President of Brazil, the President of Chile, the President of Venezuela"--he mentioned a couple of others--and I'll give Gordon full authority, in my name, to accept anything you all can agree to."

M: But he couldn't do that, huh?

G: No, he went back to the hotel; and started looking for presidents, and, in effect, they said, "Look, you've dug yourself a hole now, and you'd better just stay there."

M: Was Johnson able to deal with them pretty much on an equal basis? He didn't play the big brother?

G: No, no. In fact, he was very respectful of their position as presidents, the office. I had also noticed this when presidents visited Washington. Of course, that was another thing that brought us together in the White House. We had received Diaz Ordaz. We had Forbes Burnham from Guyana, the Prime Minister; we had Schick, who died a few weeks later of a heart attack, but who was [from] Nicaragua, and some other Latin American VIPs visiting at the White House. I remember with Schick, for example--after all, Nicaragua's a pretty small country--but the President was very courteous with his fellow-president.

There was one other episode there, having to do with Schick's death which I found quite moving. It illustrates, in a rather nice way, what you might call the sentimental side of the President's character. We got word one day--in a flash telegram from the Embassy down in Managua--that Schick had fainted at some ceremony at noon or so, and had been taken off to a hospital. The first reports were not too serious, but it was an alert. I'd been down on an official visit to Nicaragua about two weeks before. Schick had been up at the White House four or five weeks before. I'd become quite fond of him. He was a very attractive man, about my own age, much too young to have a fatal heart attack I thought. But we got another message during the course of the afternoon, and the report seemed to be all right. Still later, I was in the office by myself, trying to clean up the day's work, at about six-thirty or seven.

A telephone call came through from Guillermo Sevilla Sacasa, the dean of the [Diplomatic] Corps and the man who has been the Nicaraguan ambassador in Washington since the flood, saying, "I've just been on the line to Managua and talking to my"--his wife is a [relative] of [Anastasio] Somoza [Debayle]--"brother-in-law." I presume he means the present president. "And," he said, "the situation with President Schick is much worse than has been told to the public. I'm terribly worried about it, and they're worried about it. They've got a couple of pretty good cardiologists, but all of us would feel much happier if we could just get somebody from Walter Reed to help out the team there and make sure that everything possible is being done."

I said, "I'm sure this can be arranged. Give me a little while. It's late, and I'm all alone here, but let me see what I can do." So I called up the Secretary of the Army, who was on his way home. I took advantage of the opportunity to go home myself, and he called me shortly after I got home. I explained the situation to him. He said, "Well, I'll call the director of Walter Reed, and he'll be in touch with you in a few minutes."

Fifteen or twenty minutes [later], this director, Doctor So-and-so--I've forgotten his name--called. And I explained the situation. He said, "Oh, no problem at all--except transportation. Obviously, if we're going to get anybody down quickly, it'll have to be on a special plane, and that means a White House plane. We're not authorized to do that without word from the President."

I said, "I'll take care of that." So I got hold of the White House operator and asked for Walt Rostow. The President was host that night for a big dinner party for the President of Israel, at which Walt was also present. I said to the operator, "It's urgent. Please have him paged, and I'll wait." I waited, and in due course Walt came to the phone, and I explained the situation. Walt said, "Well, obviously there's no question about this. But it's a funny thing. The President, lately, on these special plane missions, has insisted on knowing about them himself. I'm sure there won't be any problem, but I'll have to buttonhole him. I can get to him in the next twenty minutes. I'll call you back. Just stay put there." So I waited.

About twenty minutes later, the telephone rang. It was the White House operator and then the President himself. He had left the dinner party to call me. He'd gone upstairs to his bedroom, because the situation involved a presidential heart attack. I think he was moved by the combination of his having had a heart attack himself, plus the fact that this was another president, plus, I'm sure, the fact that he had entertained Schick there in the White House only a couple of weeks before. He said, "Of course there will be an airplane, no problem about that. What I want you to do is more than getting just any old Walter Reed cardiologist. I want you to get two. I want my own heart man, Willis Hurst, who's down in Atlanta, Georgia. And I want you to get Dr. Mattingly, Ike's heart man. Get the plane to pick up Mattingly at Andrews, stop in Atlanta and pick up Dr. Hurst." I said, "How do I get a hold of Dr. Hurst in Atlanta?" He said, "Do that through the White House operator. That's easy. I've got my Air Aide with me, Colonel So-and-so, and he'll take care of all the details on the plane. I'll put him on when we finish talking." And he asked me if I had any late reports and [was] intensely anxious that no stone be left unturned.

So I spent the next hour on the telephone. But the first thing I did was to put in a call for Atlanta. I asked the operator to call Dr. Hurst and said I would wait. She found his line was busy. When I finally got through to him, I found that the President had called him directly to tell him to expect my call. I finally got Dr. Mattingly--the poor fellow had been at a movie--and got the whole thing laid on. About midnight the Air Aide called me to say the plane had just taken off from Andrews Air Base. Unfortunately, Schick died while they were on their way.

M: Right. But it does show the interest he was . . . .

G: Yes. The next morning, by coincidence, I was due over in the White House again, because we were inaugurating, by a direct telephone call between Johnson and Leoni, a new telephone cable service between the United States and Caracas in Venezuela. The

President was shaking his head, and he said, "As soon as those doctors get back, I want a first-hand report on what they found and whether everything was done for Schick that possibly could have been done." But he was very upset about this. It was an interesting little episode.

M: Right. That's the kind of thing that we really like to get, too.

G: Yes.

M: I don't want to limit you. Are there other topics that we haven't mentioned? You've been so patient and helpful to give me this much time.

G: Well, I've certainly covered the main things.

After we came back from Punta del Este, I was very much a lame duck, and my principal interest concerned the succession in my own job. I was also anxious to get a vacation. So the next day or so I wrote a memorandum to the Secretary saying that I would like to leave. I'd been working for the government for many years and never had gotten a full vacation. I wanted to leave at the beginning of June, so I'd have a month before taking office in Baltimore. I hoped very much that my successor might be in office immediately after I left, or have some overlap, might be selected right away. This became quite urgent. I hoped he would approve the date and so on. Dean Rusk told me a day or two later that he passed this on to the President. The President agreed in principle and wanted some ideas about a successor as assistant secretary.

Then I was at some party at the White House--I've forgotten what it was for--maybe a diplomatic reception or something--a couple of days after that. The President again pulled me aside, and he said, "This business of your successor is urgent. I really want your ideas." So I developed some recommendations over the next few days. I had three or four names. They were headed by Ed Martin, who was ambassador in Argentina, who had been assistant secretary under Kennedy, but from whom I'd learned, during the foreign ministers meeting in February, that he was willing to come back.

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G: I wrote a memorandum to the President. I typed it up at home, myself, because I didn't want my staff to get involved in this. [Edwin] Martin headed my list. I sent it to Walt Rostow saying, "This is the only copy, except for the one I've kept at home." Walt had a copy made and sent to the Secretary of State, obviously with my consent. The Secretary was very favorable to Ed Martin's name and apparently urged it on the President. Martin was asked to come up from Buenos Aires. He talked to the Secretary some. The President kept him waiting for two or three days, and finally asked him to come around to the White House and talked with him about the job, but not in a very conclusive way. He also talked to him about some other possible jobs, and then sent him back to Argentina. Then a couple of weeks passed. I had a strong impression that Tom Mann was consulted

at this point and probably expressed a negative view. I'm not entirely certain about this, but it was my impression. At any rate, no action was taken.

Then I came up to Baltimore one day to visit Mr. Garland, who had unfortunately had a slight stroke and was convalescing at home. While I was at his house, a mile up Charles Street here, I got a phone call from Walt Rostow. Walt said, "I just wanted you to know, because it's going to be announced tonight or first thing tomorrow morning, that the President has selected Covey Oliver as your successor."

M: He had not been on your list?

G: No, he had not been on my list, not because I thought he was unqualified, but because a year and a half before he had insisted on leaving the embassy in Colombia--although we had no desire to have him leave--because he had so many children to educate. He said he wanted to go back to the University of Pennsylvania, because as a faculty member he got free tuition for his children.

M: Right.

G: I thought he was out of the picture. But I must confess, I was a little surprised that the President hadn't asked me back to talk about it further. But he hadn't.

M: Are ambassadors decided upon, sort of, sometimes haphazardly, the same way?

G: Oh, yes. That turned out to be a very distressing process in a number of cases. The first one I was involved in was my own successor in Brazil. I discussed that with Dean Rusk, with Tom Mann, and a bit with Jack Vaughn, right away, as soon as I'd been named assistant secretary. I thought it was urgent. When I talked to the President about it and mentioned two or three names, the President was rather keen on the possibility of moving Tony Freeman from Mexico. He'd been in Mexico for some time, and [the President] asked us to sound out Tony. Tony sent back a very good telegram saying, "Obviously, I'm a professional diplomat and if you order me to do this, I'll do it. But if you want to know my preference, I'd really prefer to stay here. I've established very good relations here. I'd have to learn a new language"--he's very good at that, but--"It would be a totally new thing. I don't feel I've exhausted my usefulness here, yet, by any means. I would rather stay." So we had decided not to press him. We would have had another problem . . . .

M: To fill in Mexico then.

G: Yes. The President asked me to try to find outsiders, and I gave some thought to that. Actually my own choice, number one, was William D. Rogers, not the new secretary of state, but the former deputy coordinator for the Alliance for Progress.

M: Yes.

G: A law partner, at that time, of Abe Fortas. He is with Arnold and Porter. He had left the department six or eight months before. He's written a book about the Alliance for Progress.

M: Yes, right. I've seen that.

G: A good book. I'd begun to give some thing, before I knew that I was going to move to Washington, about a possible successor in Brazil. I obviously wasn't going to stay there for life. Bill Rogers had appealed to me as a fellow who had the right kind of temperament and attitudes, knew some of the key Brazilians very well, had pretty good Spanish, and would have picked up Portuguese fairly rapidly. And I thought he would have been excellent at it. I talked with John Macy at great length. John Macy was the key man who was dealing with high level personnel matters. I did some looking for other outsiders. At a given point, Bill Crockett, who was still deputy--

M: Administration side.

G: Yes, deputy under secretary for Administration, suggested Jack [John W.] Tuthill as a possibility, and that appealed to me. Just before I left Washington in early February of 1966 to go back to clean up in Rio, I wrote a memorandum to the President saying that no first class outsiders had occurred to me, complete outsiders, but there were two eminently qualified names. One who was not a professional foreign service officer, and the other who was. They were William D. Rogers and Jack Tuthill, and I gave him a brief biographical summary of each one. I hoped that he would look well on these and nominate one or the other as soon as possible. I said, "I'd love to ask for agrement while I'm still in Rio saying goodbye."

The Brazilians had just nominated their own Foreign Minister, Vasco Leitão da Cunha, who was the most distinguished diplomat in the country, to be ambassador in Washington.

M: Obviously one that would get agrement very easily.

G: I'd established a very strong position in Brazil, and since my leaving was a matter of concern to the Brazilians, I thought that the sooner we nominated somebody, the better. If I could ask for agrement for somebody while I was still there, that would show that we weren't going to leave the place vacant for some time. I waited in vain a couple of weeks. And within a few days of my departure from Rio, I sent an "eyes only" telegram, marked for the Secretary and the President, saying, "A couple of weeks ago I left a memorandum with two eminently qualified names. I still hope to . . . ." I got an immediate answer saying, "Regret that the President hasn't yet made a decision and the matter will have to await your return." So the next time I saw John Macy I asked what had happened. He said, "What happened is that the President believes that Bill Rogers has had rather close associations with Bobby Kennedy lately."

M: Cross him off.

G: Yes. It was quite clear that Bobby Kennedy's name, by then, was absolute mud. Any association with Bobby Kennedy was reason to rule out any nominee. Macy said, "Jack Tuthill doesn't fill him with enthusiasm. After all, he's essentially a Europeanist. Why can't we do some more searching on the outside." [He] said the President said in a rather flattering way, "You ought to find somebody as much like Gordon as you can. Look in the academic world. See if you can't find a Brazilianist."

So we started looking again. Actually, we didn't find a Brazilianist, but we did find Vincent Barnett, an old, old friend of mine who was president of Colgate University at that time. [He] had been an economist at Williams. He had been the Marshall Plan aid mission director in Italy. He would have been a superb choice for this job. The President got tremendously enthusiastic about him. I had tried to get him as my AID mission chief in Brazil four or five years before, and almost got him.

I called Vince at Colgate to see whether he'd be interested, and he was, but he said, "I'm just in a terribly embarrassing position. My provost is sick. I'm in the middle of a fund-raising campaign, and I'm absolutely committed to this job unless the trustees will release me. I can't ask for a release. If the President or the Secretary of State can get me off the hook, I'll do it with pleasure." So I went back to the President, [and] he said he would be happy to call the chairman. He didn't happen to know him. The chairman of their board was an insurance man, and Dean Rusk did know him personally. So Dean called, but we got nowhere. He said, "It would just be ruinous to me. Barnett is in the middle of a fund-raising campaign for Colgate and we can't spare him."

Well, the world is full of funny things. One of them is that last year, poor Vince Barnett got into one of these black studies--or black fraternity problems it was--rather, white fraternity problems.

M: Over black students.

G: Over black students. The thing ultimately led to his resignation. It would have been much better if he'd gone to Brazil.

M: Right. Safer from their students than ours.

G: So that idea was out.

Then time passed and time passed. Finally in April on the trip to Mexico, I was talking with the President on the plane. I said, "Look. Three months have passed since I was named to this job in Washington. It's terrible not to have an ambassador in Brazil." He said, "All right. Tuthill's still your man?" I said, "Yes. Not the ideal man, but a very good man." And he said, "Well, all right. Go ahead."

In the case of Colombia, when we knew that we were accepting Covey Oliver's resignation . . . . The President, of course, is an old personal friend of Covey's, and he was very reluctant to do that, but Covey insisted. I was reluctant, too. He was a fine ambassador in Bogota. But he was insistent, and he set the date, and he said that [by] the time that Lleras [Restrepo], or whoever gets elected, is inaugurated in August, "I want out. I must be back at Penn by September."

And I said, "Let's not go through this Brazilian thing again." The President said, "I agree with you. We've got several months notice. You and John Macy work on it. Get me a list of names, and let's get it all fixed. Well, that one went very well. We developed a list, and on the list was Reynold Carlson. John Macy and I screened some names off the list. I think he finally presented to the President four or five names, some insiders and some outsiders, including Carlson.

After a session with the President, Macy called me up. I was not in the discussion, but Macy had periodic meetings with the President dealing with various domestic and foreign appointments. [He] called me up and said, "The President likes Carlson's name very, very much. He wants us to go after him. Have you any idea how we can get hold of him?" I said, "Yes, I did." Carlson was working for the Ford Foundation then. [We] got hold of him, told him the President wanted to talk to him about this. It wasn't a sure thing, but he wanted to meet him. This was the idea. Carlson was quite intrigued. [We] arranged to have him come down the following week. It was actually close to the Lleras Restrepo inauguration by then. It must have been late July or early August. The President asked me to join him with Carlson in the White House. We came in and had an hour and a half's talk. The President asked all kinds of questions about Carlson's background and so on, and finally said, "Is this job in Bogota one you'd really like?" Ray said, "Yes." Johnson said, "Okay. It's yours."

He turned to me, and he said, "Call Covey Oliver and tell him we want agrement in the next day so that I can announce this, so that Carlson can join the delegation to attend Lleras Restrepo's inauguration.

M: Didn't want to waste any time this time.

G: No, it was incredibly speedy.

M: At least he learned.

G: Yes.

M: Did he have any criteria such as political affiliation, or agreement with the Vietnam policy, or anything like that on these appointments?

G: No. Not on those, certainly. Vietnam didn't come into the question one way or another. In those two cases, it seemed to me that what he was looking for was qualified outsiders. He seemed to have a bias against the professional service unless the men were exceptionally good. I'd say he clearly preferred outsiders to insiders.

M: Or insiders who were not professional foreign service?

G: Yes. That's right. But he was looking for outsiders who did seem to be specially qualified--for those posts at least. Now when it came to others . . . . After a while, I guess it was when Nick [Nicholas] Katzenbach was appointed under secretary.

M: Summer of 1966.

G: Yes. Nick called me in one day and said, "This system is terrible. You and the other assistant secretaries develop ideas. I develop ideas. John Macy develops his own ideas. Walt Rostow develops his ideas. We ought to have some way of getting these all together. I've talked to John Macy, and we've arranged that we will have periodic meetings at which he and I and John Steeves,"--who was then back from abroad as director general for the Foreign Service--"will sit down with the assistant secretary concerned. We'll look at all of the vacancies that are existing or in prospect in his region over the next six or nine months or a year, and we'll work out some proposals for all of them, insiders, outsiders, whatever. But at least we'll all go to the President--subject, of course, to the Secretary's approval--with a single recommendation." I said, "I couldn't agree with you more. That's fine."

About three months passed. I had a couple of small vacancies either on hand or in prospect, and this machinery hadn't begun to operate at all . I'd keep needling Nick from time to time and ask, "What happened to your new system?" "Oh," he said, "I haven't forgotten, but there's a problem in getting together."

Well, we finally got together on one. That was Barbados, I think, which was about to become independent, or if not Barbados, Trinidad. It was one of the small Caribbean countries, perhaps Jamaica. We talked about just that one. It was, to me, a very unsatisfactory conversation. I said, "Look, what about this idea that we were going to meet periodically and look at all of the vacancies in an area? We've got four or five." Nick said, "Oh, you're perfectly right. That's what we ought to do." Well, Nick had a lot of ideas about how to improve the administrative operations of the State Department, internally and externally, which never came to fruition.

M: Why?

G: Because I think (a) he got cynical about his ability to get anything done on internal organization, and (b) his energies got totally absorbed in various specific problems of which Vietnam was clearly one. Vietnam, Rhodesia, when it was hot, a couple of other African things.

M: Yes. He even made a trip or two over there.

G: Yes. That's right. He started with the best of good intentions. I've seen this happen, I guess, to four or five under secretaries in my time. I saw it happen to Jim Webb way back--when Dean Acheson was secretary. [I] saw it happen with Chester Bowles. George Ball, I think, never had any interest in administration. George thought that this was a good place to try to work on certain fields of policy that he was concerned with, and he really didn't give a damn about the internal organization.

M: But it doesn't apparently have too much to do with who's secretary or who's president. It's just sort of a bureaucratic inertia that can't be overcome.

G: Yes. Now here in Baltimore I've been so busy with my own job that I haven't seen much of the Department in the last six months, though I still have a lot of friends there. I hear that Mr. Richardson is making a rather significant dent in some of these problems at the moment.

M: That would be good for a future oral history project to investigate, I suppose.

G: But in any case: (a) this great scheme didn't work out, and (b) some of the appointments that actually got made to the lesser posts were really of the "fat cat" variety. There was some fellow in Trinidad--I've forgotten, now, his name--he was a Philadelphia merchant, who had no visible qualifications at all other than campaign contributions. I had said at one point to John Macy, "Look. I don't mind what we do as long as we all have some ground rules that we understand. If the President says he wants to take one or two of these jobs and set them aside for 'fat cats,' all right. Let's advise him as to which are the best ones for that purpose, where the least harm will be done. But let's do it in an orderly way." John agreed with this, but I don't know how much of an effort he made.

M: But it didn't get done.

G: It didn't get done. No. So that I felt on ambassadorial appointments kind of a .500 batting average, which I suppose isn't too bad, but [I was] very disappointed at the lack of an orderly and systematic procedure.

There was one case where we'd all agreed, actually, in one of these Katzenbach meetings, on a particular man who was the deputy chief of Missions at that time--I guess it was to be in Nicaragua. He later got black-balled by somebody, I don't know who. I heard what the alleged reasons were. The alleged reasons were that he was a terrible reactionary, which I don't think is true. But I thought it was procedurally outrageous. I'm not sure whether Nick Katzenbach cooled off on the man after having agreed to him once, or whether it was the President himself, or somebody else, in the White House.

M: Might have been a whole different level of screening he was using.

G: Yes. I don't know how many other layers existed besides John Macy. I felt I had a pretty good feel of Macy's thinking. I think John was quite candid in his personal relations with me when we were discussing these things. But I never had any clear feeling as to what happened to these nominations with advisers in the White House besides John Macy.

M: Right. Some personal calls around the country.

G: What kind of political clearance, congressional clearances, personal. That's right. Things of this kind, I just don't know. All I know is that sometimes the results I wanted happened, and sometimes they didn't happen. Nobody ever explained it.

M: Maybe .500, as you say, was a pretty good batting average under the conditions. Anything else?

G: I think that's about the whole story, except for one little postscript which is perhaps interesting. I guess I must have been one of hundreds of people to whom this happened. But in March, 1968, which is a rather important month in the life of Mr. Lyndon Johnson, I was invited one day to lunch at the White House in honor of Ludwig Erhard. The date may be of some consequence in relation to March 31. I was on my way to Chicago, I know, and changed the date in order to [be there]. Yes, there we are: 1:00 p.m., White House, March 21.

M: Oh, ten days.

G: Ten days. Yes. I was surprised at having gotten this invitation, because Erhard is a German, after all, and I had not been on the European circuit for many years. It turned out that Erhard was back from a Latin American trip, and either the President himself, or Covey Oliver, had suggested that I be put on the guest list. It was a small lunch. I think there were four tables of eight each. To my surprise, I found I was at the President's table on Erhard's right. So I was two places away from the President. I had known Erhard a little bit during my Marshall Plan days, and I used to have some German, but that's gotten very rusty.

We talked a bit through an interpreter, and the President talked with him through an interpreter. At a given point the President, who I guess had been talking with Erhard for some while in the office before, got a little tired of this. He suddenly turned to me, and he said, "Linc, what do you think about Vietnam?" I said the obvious thing, "Mr. President, you know perfectly well I don't know anything about Vietnam. I've been working on Latin America for the last seven years and had a lot to do with Europe before that. But I've never been in Southeast Asia." He said, "Don't be silly. Obviously any intelligent person who's concerned with the world and the United States must have some thoughts about Vietnam. I'm sure you do. I'd like to know what they are." And I said . . . .

M: Can't evade it now.

G: I said, "Obviously, Mr. President, you're perfectly right. That's a subject that nobody can help thinking about. I have given some thought to it, and I have got some ideas. But they're a little more complicated than I can summarize here." I thought the whole thing was rather embarrassing. There he was talking across his guest of honor to me in this way about a subject of immense concern and delicacy. Walt Rostow was a couple of places away at the same table, and so on. So I said, "Well, let me write them down for you in the next couple of days. I'm on my way to Chicago this afternoon, but I'll get them to you next week, early."

This led me to write a highly compressed memorandum, of which I sent a carbon copy to Walt Rostow. I have not the slightest reason to believe that my memo ever got to the President at all. The content of it, as it turned out, was surprisingly similar to what was going through Clark Clifford's mind on the basis of very much better information than mine. Obviously, I don't believe that what I had to say had the slightest effect on the President's thinking. But the fact that he should have asked me in that persistent way, I think, is interesting and significant.

M: That was the time at which he was apparently reaching out for some additional viewpoints that he hadn't heard before.

G: Right.

M: That's good. That's perhaps as good a summary of your connection . . . . It's certainly been nice of you to give us this much time,

[End of Tape 3 of 3 and Interview I]

LINCOLN GORDON

ADDENDUM TO ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW CONCERNING PRESIDENT LYNDON B. JOHNSON

December 3, 1978

On reading the above transcript, I have noted the omission of one episode which may be of general historical interest. It took place in Punta del Este, Uruguay, in April 1967 at the close of the meeting there of Western Hemisphere presidents. Our departure for return to Washington had been delayed because of scheduling at the airport at Montevideo, and the President asked a group of his advisers in the delegation to an informal luncheon with him in the large private house where he had been put up during the meetings. There were perhaps fifteen to twenty of us around the table.

The President began a discussion of the personalities of the various Latin American presidents and quizzed us all about which ones we thought were the most competent. Several of us singled out Frei of Chile; others mentioned Diaz Ordaz of Mexico; Lleras Restrepo of Colombia was mentioned by one as a man easy to underestimate because of his small stature and low-pitched voice. But President Johnson pressed his questioning in a special form, by asking: "If you had to pick one of those men as a companion in a battlefield trench under fire, or on a life raft in heavy seas, which would be your choice?" After some discussion back and forth, he said: "None of you has mentioned my own choice. I would pick Costa e Silva of Brazil." In fact, Costa e Silva proved too be a quite poor president of Brazil, but what evidently appealed to President Johnson was his character as a "barracks general"--to use the Brazilian expression--a tough personality who could be relied on to stand by his friends under fire. On that score the President's instinct was unerring.

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In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44, United States Code and subject to the terms and conditions hereinafter set forth, I, Lincoln Gordon of Washington, D. C. do hereby give, donate and convey to the United States of America all my rights, title and interest in the tape recordings and transcripts of the personal interview conducted on July 10, 1969 in Baltimore, Maryland and prepared for deposit in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

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(2) The tape recordings shall be available to those researchers who have access to the transcripts.

(3) I hereby assign to the United States Government all copyright I may have in the interview transcripts and tapes.

(4) Copies of the transcripts and the tape recordings may be provided by the Library to researchers upon request.

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Signed by Lincoln Gordon on December 2, 1978

Accepted by James B. Rhoads, Archivist of the United States, on December 22, 1978

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