INTERVIEW I

DATE: December 4, 1968

INTERVIEWEE: JACK HOOD VAUGHN

INTERVIEWER: JOE B. FRANTZ

PLACE: Mr. Vaughn's office, Washington, D.C.

Tape 1 of 2

F: Mr. Vaughn, tell us how you progressed from Columbus, Montana to your present position.

V: It seems at this point like a long progression. I moved from Montana to the state of Michigan when I was a teenager and went to school in Michigan, went to the University of Michigan, and was boxing coach there, taught French and Spanish there after the war.

F: Did you ever box professionally?

V: I did, yes.

F: What class?

V: I started as a light flyweight as an amateur, never got above feather-weight although people still refer to me as a lightweight in some cases.

F: You're talking about boxing now?

V: I'm talking about administrative ability, I think. I fought for seven years as an amateur and for about four as a professional. Most of my professional fights were in Mexico, although I did fight in Michigan and Illinois, Indiana, California, as a pro.

F: I would think the Mexican experience would be another story in itself. We won't go into it today, but I may have to come back and talk to you about that.

V: Right. Also after leaving the University of Michigan where I was teaching in '46 to '48, I taught for a year at the University of Pennsylvania. Then in '49 I left teaching and went to Bolivia as the director of the Bi-national Cultural Center there, which was about the best job I've ever had with the exception of my current position.

F: This was in La Paz?

V: Yes. And this is a great operation, very inexpensive for us, and I think has enormous impact throughout Latin America wherever these centers are operated. I spent two years there and was transferred to Costa Rica where I did the same thing at the Cultural Center in San Jose. When I came back in early '52, I joined AID [Agency for International Development] as an economist and was sent to Panama where I stayed for four years. I was working in economic development, broad range of activities; I was the head of an organization called the Joint Fund Service for Economic Development. We were in low-cost housing and credit co-ops, water resources, industrial productivity, and I had a chance really to get acquainted with the Panamanian society; went from there, this was in 1956, to Bolivia where I was senior economist with the AID mission in Bolivia. I came back in 1958 to Washington where I taught for a year at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies. From there I was assigned to be program officer, that is, planning and coordinating officer, for Europe and Africa of the AID program. This was a very exciting period because, as you recall, in Africa at that time, '58, '59, '60, all of these countries were achieving their independence. And I helped set up the AID programs in Guinea, Senegal, Mali,

Mauritania; and in 1960 I was assigned as AID director to what was then the Mali Federation, including Senegal and Mali, and they were not long for each other, and it soon came apart and I was in Dakar as AID director for Senegal. It was at this point that I met Sargent Shriver. This was in the summer of 1961.

F: Did you meet him there?

V: Yes, sir, just after Peace Corps was started. And he was looking for a man to head up the Latin American region which was the slowest of the four regions we have now in getting started. It seemed like the Latins weren't too excited about Peace Corps, perhaps because they didn't understand it, perhaps because they didn't need as many teachers as they did in Africa and the Far East.

F: Were there ever any attempts in these early days to coordinate the Peace Corps with the Alianza [Alliance for Progress]?

V: None at all. In fact, in those days our stance was quite aloof. Mr. Shriver felt, and I think correctly, that in order for the Peace Corps to succeed, it must have a separate identity. It must establish itself as something different, even slightly different, and not a sub-agency, not junior AID, not a Fulbright program, and so we went out of our way to create this different impression, and we didn't cooperate with anyone really the first three or four years. That has all changed, and I pushed the change to the point where we now cooperate fully with AID, with United Nations, with the private and other organizations, foundations, and the like.

F: I'd like to explore that later, but we will come back to it.

V: Fine. I was very much impressed with both Shriver and his message as to what he was trying to do. And since most of my adult experience had

been in and around Latin America, I was eager to get back, and I was at the same time becoming somewhat disillusioned with AID. It had become such a ponderous bureaucracy it was so hard to do anything, and I felt that the time had come to make the move. All my friends thought that I was out of my mind. My ambassador said, "That agency won't last six months." I have been very pleased ever since that I did make the change. So I came back here in October of 1961 and helped get the Latin American program started, which is now our largest program in the Peace Corps. We have some 4,200 volunteers in twenty countries. And it has been the greatest experience of my life. I feel that it has grown and matured and now we are doing many of the things that Shriver dreamed that we might be able to do in the Peace Corps.

F: Did you have any sort of a quid pro quo situation as far as getting countries to accept the Peace Corps in Latin America?

V: No, it was instead the jungle telegraph. There were two countries, Chile and Colombia, where there was interest in having volunteers, and within six months of their arrival, the word has gotten out to neighboring countries that it was for real, that it was helpful, it was different and some ways better than any kind of aid they had had before. And the requests started to flood in, and we burgeoned in just a year and a half from three countries with 175 volunteers to sixteen countries with over two thousand [volunteers], and it has never changed. We have had fewer problems in Latin America than any other area of the Peace Corps.

F: How have you handled, and I'm not focusing strictly on Latin America, how have you handled national sensitivities that this might in some

way be patronizing?

V: The big advantage we have over all other agencies of the United States that operate abroad is that we work for the other fellow. Where we provide volunteers, for example, to the ministry of agriculture, they are regular employees of that ministry; they work on their terms, within their system, follow their rules, procedures and the rest, and this can't be patronizing when we say, "You tell us. We are here to serve you on your terms, to help you seek your kind of solutions to your particular problems." And we still get criticism from Americans, some of our anthropologists are prone to use the term "cultural imperialism" and in the academic world as in the political world we are bedeviled by cliches that we really don't understand, and in many cases have no applicability. But we aren't cultural imperialists by any stretch of the imagination, because we go speaking their language and often the native dialect, and we go there in a non-arrogant way, in a reverent way to work for them as they want us to work. So this among other things, Joe, caused problems with Congress where they say each year, "What are your five-year projections?" And we say, "How can we have five-year plans if we're responsive to the other fellow's priorities and changes; a new administration comes in and the program is varied." So we really can't make this kind of projection. I wish I could. I wish I could say, "In five years the Peace Corps will have 50,000 volunteers in a hundred countries." But we just play it year by year, or really month by month, in accordance with what our host wants.

F: What are the chances--I'm hypothetically a young graduate of, say, some agricultural college. What are my chances of getting the country

of my selection?

V: We're disappointed when an individual does not specify the country he wishes to go to. Ninety-five percent do specify either the region, say, Latin America or Africa, or the specific country. In some cases in big countries like India and Brazil, they will say, "I would like to go to northeast Brazil" or the specific state. So if you are a typical applicant and do specify what you want, the chances are excellent you will go there if you are able to wait a bit, because about 60 percent of our training is done during the summer and early fall. And if you were to apply, say, in mid-winter, if you could wait till late summer to start training, the chances are overwhelming that you could get exactly the country you wanted to go to.

F: Do they assign me to a specific ministry within the country? In other words, I don't know where I'm going within the country until the local country tells me?

V: This used to be the case, but what you would find now is that by the time training were half over--our training lasts from twelve to fourteen weeks usually--and much of it is done in the country where the volunteer is going to serve, but by the time training were half completed, you would know specifically where you were going, the name of the town probably.

F: That ought to improve training.

V: It does. We find that the young adults we deal with want honesty, want integrity, want candor all the way through. And we find we can achieve this by giving them practical and realistic training which can best be provided by putting them in the host country and then

they can make their decisions whether they are good enough or if they want it for two years.

F: Now, you are dealing in general with a group of people who are idealistic, at least to some degree, or they wouldn't go into a program like this. How do you discipline an idealist so that you don't have just an embarrassing epidemic of such instances as the girl as I recall writing a postcard home from Africa that became an international incident?

V: I could talk for an hour about that case, and especially what has happened since, but this couldn't happen now.

F: Well, I would like to explore this.

V: The letter could be written, the postcard could be written, but nothing would happen, because that has been the kind of immunization for us. Many more controversial and critical things occur weekly in the Peace Corps that we couldn't even sell to the press, but it's a question, I think, of dealing with young adults in an adult way where you place the responsibility on them. My view is that there is nothing quite as sobering or maturing as to give a person responsibility. If you are outside the arena as a critic, that's one thing. If you are in the arena, stuck with the responsibility of doing a job, that changes the whole equation, and we have no other way, we have no other philosophy of dealing with this than to throw it back to the volunteers, say "It's up to you. We aren't going to order you to do anything or prohibit you from doing something." We are going to say, "Here's your mandate, and there's a fantastic opportunity to do something important for self, for country, for family, for host, for posterity. Go ahead and do it." And on this

basis, they perform up to or above standards every time. The converse would be to tell them, "Do this, don't do that," and treat them as juveniles. If we do that, we find that they perform as juveniles. I think there's a lesson here for parents, too.

F: Yes. Now, then, I will presume that by and large people know what they are getting into, and therefore you don't feel any great concern or have any great problem with their not participating in the material and cultural delights of the country they are in, but you must have some problem with so many young people, on both sides of the sexual fence, with regards to local involvement with individuals.

V: I would say that the incidence of problems in this area is no higher probably lower, than in the United States. We do have a certain amount of inter-marrying. We have what you might call romantic countries. I could cite Colombia, Costa Rica, the Philippines, Malaysia, maybe two or three others, where there has been an unusual percentage of volunteers marrying host country nationals. Some of them stay there and go into business with their new father-in-law, but as far as problems, difficulties, and notorious things happening in this social sexual area--

F: No more than any dean of men or dean of women.

V: I would say less and partly because they are just a bit older. They aren't college freshmen, sophomores, they are twenty-two or twenty-five, and many of them have masters degrees, and they are just a bit older and more responsible, and they are stuck in so many cases with their first serious job which is very trying, demanding, fulltime, and I think is less temptation to get out of line in this area because there

isn't time, there isn't the temptation, they have other things to do. They aren't bored with time on their hands.

F: Let's come back to specifics. What did you do when you came in under Sargent Shriver to get Latin America on the road?

V: I got on the road myself and went to talk about this prospect with my friends in Latin countries, not a selling job really as much as an interpreting job, as to what this resource could mean for them, what its limitations were, too. And very shortly we had literally dozens of requests from fifteen or sixteen countries. We went into the area of community development which was unique in the Peace Corps; well over half of our volunteers in the first five years were called "community development volunteers," urban and rural, and this seems to have worked out very well. I don't really understand why it has not been applicable in other geographical areas. But even today about 50 percent of our volunteers are in community development. We didn't have many serious problems.

F: Did this just grow, was it conceived here, how did you get into community development?

V: It was conceived here. We looked at the kind of problems that the Latin American villages had. The problem was lack of animation, lack of organizational skill, lack of planning, follow-through. We felt that to have an outsider go in who had some ideas as to how to get things done, to run a committee, to mount a campaign, that some of the long dormant resources could be mobilized, both human and material, and things could be done where the villagers, the peasants, could be helped to define their felt needs, and with somebody there as a promoter, and in Colombia for example they are called "promotores"

the community development agents. They could make faster progress than they had been making the past couple of hundred years. And this in fact worked out. We've had several almost scientific studies, sociological kinds of studies, as to the impact of these people resident in a dormant or stagnant peasant village for a couple of years, some very exciting and very worthwhile things happened.

F: Did you play each community ad hoc or did you have some kind of a formula, you drill a well, you build a house, or something like that?

V: We played it ad hoc because here again in the last analysis it was what they wanted and many of the things struck us as what the economists would call conspicous government consumption, that is, they wanted a church or they wanted a swimming pool, they wanted something that the big landowner had that had always been out of their reach. So if the first project the villagers decided upon, where they put their money, had to do with fixing the roof of the church, that was fine as a start, and then with confidence and know-how other things could be undertaken, a public shower, an athletic field, a co-op, dozens of things. But there was no pattern and no philosophy from us. It was instead premised on what that particular group of villagers wanted.

F: And this just built up to a great extent as word of mouth?

V: It came from that and from so many public officials observing what was going on, where we start off in a public health project and the minister of agriculture happens to run into a couple of volunteers out in the bush, and he said, "I think I could use a couple of dozen of those. Do you suppose I could get them?" And that's the way, as much having seen them as by word of mouth because it is a lot

more convincing. You might say, too, at this point that if you look at our congressional support and it's general and it's bi-partisan, you find that you can draw lines between those real supporters and those who are still a bit skeptical, and that line can be drawn between those who have seen volunteers performing in the field and those who have only heard about them, but have never felt and experienced what happens when a volunteer is in action. Really when it works right, it is almost poetry.

F: Did you run into much local hostility in villages? Some of them, I'm sure, have been isolated or insulated against outsiders for, well, forever.

V: Yes, I think that we could put the hostility of the non-communist variety, we've always had bitter opposition from the communists, Radio Moscow on down. In fact, every time I go abroad I am met by a barrage of ten or fifteen minutes from Radio Moscow. They describe me as--

F: Sort of as if you had come in in a spiked helmet.

V: Yes. They called Shriver, my predecessor, "the FBI millionaire butcher from Chicago" and they refer to me as "the CIA multi-millionaire from the eastern establishment," which I think both my banker and my Montana friends find amusing. But other than the communist and far leftist criticism, opposition, I would say that the main opposition, or at least reluctance, has come from those who long suppressed peasants in countries, say, in the Andean area where they are not in the society in any sense, they don't speak the language, they aren't in the money economy, they don't vote, and so forth. Well, the white man had mistreated and abused them for so many centuries,

first the Spaniard, and then the European; they had been exploited by the white foreigner for so long that there was a real barrier. We found that this barrier wanished by magic almost when the volunteer went in speaking that person's dialect. If they went in speaking Spanish, say, then they were just like any other white man, not to be trusted, his tongue to be checked to see if it was forked, and if they went in speaking Aymara or Quecha, they were inside the home in the first day for lunch. It was that simple. So this has been the only area where we have seen resistance or opposition which has largely disappeared. I don't know of any case now.

F: To digress just a moment, in your teaching of dialects, do you think you have made an academic impact that has some permanence?

V: I am convinced that we have. The academic people who work for us tell me that we have.

F: Well, there was a time when I wouldn't have known where to go to learn Quecha.

V: We teach 145 languages, which is probably four times as many as any other agency in the United States, and I have a feeling we teach them better. In the first place, we teach them with people from that country, and we have very small classes, high intensity; in fact, most of our projects now start off with what we call 'total immersion,' twelve hours a day of the language for six days a week for a month. This seems to get them over the hump and give them confidence. But we have made, I am convinced, a number of technical, pedagogical-related contributions to the learning of the teaching of modern languages.

F: All right, I want to go to Bolivia; I need to learn Quecha; I have

reasonable intelligency; how soon can you set me down in a Bolivian village where I will feel comfortable in the language? I don't mean fluent, but adequate.

V: It would take us about 400 hours. For some of the more difficult exotic languages, the tonal languages, the Thai and the Korean, it would take 600-700 hours before you could reach the point of being comfortable. And not everyone can reach that point. We give all of our applicants what we call a "modern language aptitude test," and if a person were to score low, say, under 40, under 35, we wouldn't put them in a project where a tough language was required. If you scored 60 to 70, then we would be able to risk you in just about any league. But this, in terms of weeks not hours, would mean fourteen weeks before you would be able to get off the plane and be comfortable in saying, "I'd like a Llama steak," or whatever you wanted.

F: Did the Cuban missile crisis in this period impose any hardship or, for that matter, the reverse, did it assist any in your Peace Corps program?

V: I would say it had no impact whatsoever. We, by that time, had established an image, a reputation, of being different, as not being an instrument of U.S. foreign policy, and we went right ahead. This was well outside any of our activities or problems.

F: Do your discourage your volunteers from taking stances in the national political problems, either here in the states or in the host country?

V: Only in terms of issues and problems and personalities in the host country. We feel strongly that for Peace Corps volunteers to become involved in domestic or local partisan politics is the shortest way

of coming home. We just can't tolerate it, and moreover volunteers aren't invited to foreign countries to get involved in their politics. With regard to their being allowed to speak out on other issues beyond the country in which they are serving, we have no problems. We hope that it will be mature, we hope that it will be done in an articulate way and it won't be a full-time profession. But you can imagine how many different views we have on our foreign policy.

F: Well, I was wondering, for instance, if I were in Peru, its locally cataclysmic, Belaunde Terry was put on a plane; now then I might almost be forced to take a stance just to get along with the local people, who are either pro or con in this situation. How do I handle it; just say "no opinion"?

V: No. I think the only way to handle it would be among friends, a small audience, if they asked your opinion, you might give it, you might have to give it, but the real problem comes with going to the media and appearing to speak for the Peace Corps or for the United States government. If you are among friends or students--

F: I have a private individual's rights.

V: Yes, and you talk in the kind of bull session, there never has really been any problem.

F: Let's shift slightly. Did you meet Mr. Johnson during his vice presidential days in this capacity?

V: I was still in Senegal when the Vice President came out for the inauguration of the Senegalese president.

F: That was his first trip aborad.

V: I think it was.

F: As vice president.

V: And I had a chance not only to meet him and talk at some length, but to make a trip into the interior with him. He wanted to see some of the activities of AID and get a feel for what the Senegalese society and culture was like. We spent half a day visiting a village not too far from Dakar, and he had a most enjoyable time, got along well with the local village chief.

F: Did you go by car?

V: Yes. And I rode with him and had a chance to brief him on the situation there with regard to the economy and the agricultural programs and problems. It was a fishing village, and he was being shown the fishing equipment, the boats, motors, by the village chief, and he was rather surprised to find that they had an Evenrude motor on this boat they were examining. He said, "The only motor that I would be pleased with would be a Johnson outboard. I'll send you a new Johnson motor when I get back." And he did. But I also accompanied as his interpreter to visit the since-deposed president, a man named Mamadou Dia. I was much impressed by his ability to relate to this man. He was talking about both our accomplishments and his dreams for improving civil rights legislation, for improving opportunities for the black American, his concern about this process of integration. I could see this Senegalese president's eyes light up, and you would have thought for openers that they had absolutely nothing in common. Culturally, religiously, linguistically, in no way did they have common points to have a dialogue about. And yet after an hour or so he had completely captivated this man and there was geniune warmth and understanding between the two of them. I have never seen him in that kind of one-to-one discussion starting from scratch, from

cold scratch. And he left after an hour with this man thinking that he was a great man, that he was completely sincere in his desire to bring about equality among races in the United States, something that he has done more to achieve than obviously any president we've ever had. And I was really greatly impressed by him; he was very kind to me and always has been. Although I didn't have any occasion to see him for the next two or three years, I felt that I had a friend and a warm contact that I could approach at any time. I never had occasion to approach him until he approached me to go to Panama as our ambassador in 1964.

F: Was part of this visit improvised, or was it pretty well laid out?

V: The visit to Senegal?

F: To Senegal, yes.

V: No, it was well laid out. We have that constraint overseas. When somebody at that level comes, we have to have it worked out almost minute by minute.

F: Well, Mr. Johnson has a reputation for fracturing schedules.

V: He does, and he fractured this one. But it still doesn't relieve you of the responsibility of having a minute-by-minute schedule.

F: How did he fracture it?

V: Well, on this trip he made to the interior, it took much longer than he anticipated, and he was having such a good time he just stayed on, and this gave me a chance to get to know him better and to talk a lot more. But he didn't really come to do the cocktail circuit. He seemed to be more comfortable and more pleased when he was out with the people and talking to them. I remember one rather embarrassing thing that occurred in the same fishing village. There are a number

of stalls along the main street. Most of them were stores that sold dry goods and yard goods, and the men are the seamstress, or the seamster I guess you would call it in that society; the women don't sew. It's the male there at this foot-pedal operated machine, and Mrs. Johnson with all these beautiful fabrics, batiks and very bright strikingly-designed fabrics around on the walls and the racks, on the shelves. The photographer suggested that Mrs. Johnson should sit down at the sewing machine to pretend that she was sewing a dress or a boo-boo (sp), and this caused great consternation; they were not prepared to let a woman sew. "How dare you suggest that a women could or should sew. Not in our society." And it didn't come off. After a great deal of pressure from the PI types and the rangling and pushing, it never did come off. They laughed when she sat down at the sewing machine.

F: Did she go off on her own then in a different direction. I seem to recall that.

V: Yes, I think she did. She went to see a clinic and several other activities, whereas he went to see the village chief who wanted to show him his home and they had a talk and drank tea. The village chief gave him one of these very unusual-looking almost coolie-like hats they wear, shaped like a coolie hat but it is made of leather and had a tassel on the top. It's very ornate and ornamental and quite a trophy. He received one of these from the chief as I recall. But it was a great day, and I could tell that he was enjoying it enormously. He has talked about a number of times since. He wrote me about it after he returned to the United States.

F: Skipping ahead, did you have any advance notice that you were going to

go to Panama? I don't want to embarrass you, but was this something that was solicited, or did it originate with the President?

V: I may be an unusual bureaucrat, but I have never solicited a job of any kind and don't intend to. But this was out of the blue. We were having a meeting in Colombia of our regional directors for Latin America of the Peace Corps. It was during this meeting that the events occurred in Panama, the shooting started, and the relations were suspended between our two countries. It was still going on--I was in communication with our director in Panama because of the harassment and the problems and all the rest that concerned Peace Corps.

F: He wasn't at the meeting?

V: No, he had to stay there because I think the day before the meeting this all started. The meeting ended in Bogota. I left to visit volunteers, and I had gone to Medellin for a couple of days, and I was visiting volunteers there in the slums when I was notified by a messenger that I had a call from the White House. And I was told that I should come back immediately to meet with Mr. Mann who was the assistant secretary of state for Latin American affairs, and with Dean Rusk and Mr. Ball and others. So I came back and came in directly to the White House looking disheveled and rumpled, and a Cabinet meeting was just breaking up. So I immediately talked to Mr. Rusk whom I didn't know at all, and had a chat of ten or fifteen minutes with him over this prospect. I heard later that he didn't especially like my moustache. And he is not unusual in that; many people don't. But other than that, I had no comment. I talked to

other people, and in three or four days I got the word that I was going to be the ambassador. Well, negotiations were going on at that time, we had a high-level delegation in Panama, Mr. Martin and others, trying to work out how we stood, how we could get back together. So my appointment, or the announcement of it, was delayed until April. This was late January. And so nothing happened until early April, and I was given very short notice, was urged to get down there immediately, and I was not--

F: You didn't have from January until April to anticipate you were going, then?

V: I did, yes.

F: You did have this period when you knew you were going eventually but you didn't know exactly when.

V: But, you see, I couldn't begin my briefings or anything like that. So actually I had about three or four days to get ready, went down not having any idea what I would meet when I got there. So in my own scheming way, I decided to arrive at the oddest hour I possibly could. I arrived at 4:00 a.m. in a driving rainstorm, hoping there wouldn't be any picketers or protesters or any embarrassment for myself or my government.

F: Did you go down by commercial airplane?

V: By commercial plane. And the plane taxied up to the ramp and I saw the enormous banner, it must have been forty feet long and twelve or fifteen feet high, it said, "Welcome Jack," and it was being held up by about thirty-five or forty of my best old friends that I had known from 1952 to '56. And there was no problem after that. It was like a married couple that has had a serious squabble. There

is after a few days a real desire on both parties to get back together, to make amends, but neither one is willing to take the lead to breaking the ice. Well, we took the lead and I was really overwhelmed with the affection and kindness; it was a very easy stint for me.

F: How long were you there?

V: About ten months.

F: I came through there just about the time you left. I was there in January of '65.

V: Is that right?

F: You can still see evidence of the rioting.

V: Yes, that Pan Am Building down on the corner.

F: Well, your job then was primarily one of sort of pacification and getting things back to a normal relationship?

V: That plus beginning negotiations for a new treaty between the two countries, really three new treaties having to do with updating and modernizing the old 1903 treaty having to do with a base rights agreement on the use of facilities and land by the military; and thirdly and probably more importantly the negotiations of a sea level canal, and the kind of treaty that would accommodate that which would change almost everything. And I spent literally thousands of hours during that time on these negotiations laying the groundwork, hammering out an understanding on the basic points which I found very fascinating and rewarding. I felt by the time I left the job of assistant secretary which I took after I left Panama that we had a good agreement. Ambassador Robert Anderson, who was in charge of the negotiations overall, had done a superb job in working this

out. It was unfortunate that the political cycle went as it did, both theirs and ours, because about the time we had reached a basic agreement, then their elections came up.

F: This was a natural political issue.

V: Yes. And there was no chance, we decided, of getting ratification by the Panamanian legislature, and so we had to go into the new cycle. After [Dr. Arnulfo] Arias was elected replacing [Marco Aurelio] Robles, we were about ready to get back on the track and the military coup came. I haven't followed this terribly closely, feeling that my looking over their shoulder wouldn't be greatly appreciated in the State Department now that I am in another arena completely. But I have vicariously enjoyed and participated in everything that has happened since I left that arena about three years ago.

F: In your stint as ambassador, did you find that the Canal Zone tends to run an operation independent of the United States relationship with Panama? In other words, is there sort of a basic conflict there?

V: There is a basic conflict. It's much less acute than it was five years ago or ten years ago, and much of the amelioration has been the result of a special committee of three which was set up when I went there as ambassador; it's called the Panama Review Committee; it includes the governor, the four-star general in command of the southern command, Cinc South, and the U.S. ambassador who is the chairman of the committee, who sets the agenda, who can get a tie broken when there is disputation or disagreement, and this has given us one voice, something we never had before. It wasn't just the Canal Zone and its own particular interests and objectives, but

it was the military which had still others; there were conflicts between the military and the Canal Zone administration and the State Department. This may not be the ultimate solution to this problem, but it is an enormous step forward because they are talking to each other weekly, they meet every week, and they are talking about common problems and their different views on these common problems can be resolved in 95 percent of the cases just by meeting and compromising and hashing them out.

F: You didn't have this system at the time of the flag-raising incident?

V: Not at all. There was the same old compartmentalization that had existed for decades, and this was one of the problems. But I'm satisfied that this has worked beautifully. I am surprised in retrospect that it wasn't done many, many years ago, but you really can't do business abroad if you have three operations each with a different mandate and each with a different objective who aren't really talking to each other, who aren't really bound together.

F: And this one was a territorial function also.

V: Yes, and it had to do with not just Panama because, you see, the Canal Zone government was dealing with shipping companies from all over the world. The military in Cinc South was dealing with most other Latin countries in training and a whole host of things, in communication, and the rest, so it had far-reaching implications. The need to have one voice and one point of decision was so overwhelming that I don't see how I could have done that job in the absence of this arrangement of the review committee.

F: Do the Panamanians truly fear the threat of a non-Panamanian second canal, that is, a canal somewhere other than in Panama?

V: I don't think they fear it because I don't believe they think it will come to pass. I think their philosophy, their belief, is that there are so many obvious and natural physical geographic and technical advantages in having it through the Isthmus that the idea of a canal through Colombia or Nicaragua is just maybe a threat that we are using from time to time to bring them to heal. I don't think they are intimidated by this. It's an irritant whenever we bring it up or someone brings it up, but I'm sure that they are convinced to the last man that all logic is in favor of, is behind having the new sea level canal in the Isthmus of Panama.

F: This matter of decision, really, abrogation, of the Hay-Bunau Varilla Treaty, is this a piece of window-dressing, speaking for public consumption on the part of Panamanian officials, or are they sincere in the fact that you've got to do it to get a completely new arrangement?

V: I know they are sincere, and I deeply share this opinion that they have, for this reason: when that treaty was negotiated and some of the more important subsequent amendments, Panama in most senses was not a nation; it had none of the style, none of the institutions, aspirations, and the rest; it was instead a strip of jungle with two terminal towns, and then it began to grow.

F: Kind of a fire brigade in charge of the whole thing.

V: Exactly. And then suddenly it became an independent nation and with all that that implies. The kind of treaty that was negotiated in 1903, and we know the history there as to why Panama seceded from Colombia and the rest, when you compare what we were dealing with then, they weren't equal, they weren't a nation in any sense, and

then over the years they had progressed to the point where they were a nation, and in terms of international law and in many other ways they were equals and should be dealt with as equals. And so what I am saying is that the arrangements, the understanding, the revenue and the rest, had over the years become obviously anachronistic, obviously unfair. The kind of revenue they get, I'm talking about direct revenue, where they were getting a million and then a million plus and then two million a year, as compared to the kind of rental we pay on, say, a military base in Morocco or Spain, it became ludicrous; it was unfortunate that they had to resort to the method they did to bring us to the negotiating table. I've personally been lobbying for many years wherever I could to get us to be more forthcoming in modernizing. I think that is the only term that has relevance here, to modernize the agreement so that it will reflect what exists now as distinct from what existed in 1903.

F: Do you think the threat of removal of U.S. sovereignty over the Canal Zone is real, or again is it something to talk about?

V: I think that it is real and in some ways and for some people this is the crucial issue, and I remember this dramatic case, example of this, you may know about this, but it was about as clear an indication as to what was coming as anything that happened in the past ten years. It had to do with the construction of the bridge over the canal. They had been asking us for many, many years to help them out; they weren't concerned, and maybe we didn't understand this, but they weren't concerned about the ferry arrangement, that was perfectly adequate, to ferry cars back and forth; what they wanted was something symbolic to reunify Panama that had been cut in two by the canal. So

finally after saying no all these years we said yes and we built this beautiful bridge to replace the Thatcher ferry. And the fact that we didn't recognize why they wanted the bridge led us to name the bridge the Thatcher Ferry Bridge. Thatcher, his name, was associated with all the inequities of the past, the colonialism, the militarism, the old pattern. And when Under Secretary Ball went down to Panama to inaugurate the bridge and they unveiled the plaque and it said, "Thatcher Ferry Bridge," we almost had a revolution then. He was unable to make his speech, there was a near riot. If we had said anything but Thatcher Ferry Bridge, if we had said The Bridge of the Alliance for Progress, the Bridge of Panamanian-American Friendship, anything that would have been in keeping with the philosophy, the symbolism, of this reunification of the linking up of the two pieces of the country, there would have been a great deal of gratitude and benefit accruing to us. But it's that, it's the nationalism, the symbolism, of this that is really important.

F: Has the Thatcher Ferry name persisted?

V: No, it is now called the Bridge of the Americas. So we do learn the hard way, but we learn.

F: Why did you quit as ambassador to Panama?

V: I was asked to replace Mr. Mann as assistant secretary for Latin America and coordinator for the Alliance for Progress, and I was a little reluctant to leave at that point because I did feel that we had this particular show on the road of the negotiations and the sea-level commission and its work. And I came up in April of 1965 which was just before the Dominican Republic intervention which shows you how absolutely great my timing is. And I stayed there for

about a year.

F: One question that may be sensitive. There have been, it seems to me, an abnormal number of assistant secretaries of state for inter-American affairs--to put it another way, a rather more than usual turnover, about a half dozen in this decade.

V: More than that, really. I think there have been eight.

F: Why do they move so fast?

V: Part of this is accidental, part of this is responsive to changes in administration. When President Kennedy came in there was a change, and then another change and then President Johnson took over and there have been several changes. It hasn't been contrived, it hasn't been planned in any sense; it has been accidental, but yet in saying that I should confess that it's probably as close to an impossible job as any job in town because as you know, the Alliance for Progress is the largest AID segment. As you know, the job of running something like that with a portfolio of a billion dollars a year, say, is more than a full-time job. Moreover, the diplomatic side is more than enough to keep anybody fully occupied. The assistant secretary has both these things to supervise.

F: I would think the social demands would be killing.

V: They are. And, for example, during the Dominican crisis in the early days I didn't go home at all on many occasions. And I would very seldom get out before ten or ten-thirty at night which is the same way it is in the Peace Corps. But it is a killing job. Some say that this can be improved by raising the level of the job, creating a new position of Under Secretary for Latin American Affairs. I'm not sure that this would solve the problem, because if it were still

a combined operation with both AID and State being under one man, I think it would continue to be a killer. But none of the recent occupants of this position has died on the job. I have seen Mr. Mann when he looked like he was on the verge with the deep grey circles under his eyes. I've been told by my staff that I looked like a mortician's apprentice, but it is a killer. That however does not really bear on why there has been this unusual change, rate of change, which we have had almost every year. Covey Oliver was the longest in office; he was there, I think, about a year and a half. Lincoln Gordon before him was there a little over a year. I before Gordon was there just ten months. Mann before him a little over a year. So it causes I would think the worst kind of problems, because even for an old Latino like the last five assistant secretaries, it takes six or eight months to get broken in and to find out where the skeletons are and to make the acquaintance of the key people you will be dealing with, the foreign ministers and the ambassadors in town, and then about the time you're starting to become efficient, out you go. So, as you can see, I'm not proposing any solutions, just commenting on what has happened. But I can't really define why it has happened other than to say it's been for a different reason in each move, each change.

F: Did you have the feeling that Mr. Johnson wanted you for that job, or that it was Dean Rusk's initiative that brought you in for Panama?

V: I don't think it was Secretary Rusk's desire, initiative, at all. I didn't know him. I'm sure it was 100 percent from the White House, and I have never been able to determine what they thought of my performance. I have come to know Dean Rusk very well. He has been

very kind and gentle and helpful, both then and during the time I've been with Peace Corps, extremely helpful and tolerant and 'hands off.' As you know, in the State Department today given the magnitude of the task, the assistant secretaries are in a sense secretaries of state for that region; the senior people just can't cope with all the detail and the rest, so that it results in being a somewhat compartmentalized job and maybe like the secretary of state's job was a hundred years ago, that's what an assistant secretary copes with.

F: Did your new duties involve much personal relationship with people on the Hill?

V: Yes, for the first time. I had never had a position where I was in contact with so many congressmen. I had to present the Alliance for Progress budget propsal to Congress, in dealing with the lobbies, with the travelers, with the problems and issues of all kinds, I was just thrown into this congressional league which I find about the most enjoyable part of the job. They are great guys, an unusual mix of personalities and types and philosophies, that I really do enjoy it. And I have had no change in coming over to the Peace Corps. Our relations, I guess, Joe, are better and closer than those at any other federal agency. We have every reason to deal with Congress all the time because our constituents are theirs, too, and they vicariously participate in this operation a lot more than they would, say, in the Alliance for Progress. This was the first time it happened, in '65, and I found it to be both the most rewarding and the most enjoyable part of my job.

F: You ran right into Santa Domingo?

V: Yes.

F: Let's talk about that briefly. One, how did it involve you, and two, what did it do to your Alliance plans?

V: It involved me totally for about five months because here again it wasn't just the military and the negotiations, but it was also a major AID effort that we put on with great complications and demands for new personnel, and I was handling that, too. So I was involved as fully as a person could be and it did limit my ability to work in other areas, other countries, where I more or less had to abandon parts of activities in the rest of the hemisphere, both political and AID.

F: Did you have much direct contact or any direct contact with the President during this period, or did things come through Mr. Rusk?

V: I had direct contact especially in the early critical period which extended for about six or seven weeks where there were sometimes daily meetings that I attended in the White House, sometimes two or three times a day.

F: Give a generalization on what those meetings were like.

V: They were what you might call the typical President Johnson meeting where he was eager and insistent upon getting all opinions from all participants. He's not authoritarian, he doesn't jump the gun, never has. He keeps probing and asking questions, and then repeating the question and then asking it in another way and drawing everybody out trying to get a consensus, trying to get the best information he can. He gives great attention to every detail, amazing, not only how he pries it out, insists upon getting the details, but how he remembers a week later something the other participants will have

forgotten, he will bring up and repeat verbatim the way it was. So it was hour by hour, night and day, meetings every day, and then after a while when Ambassador Bunker began to make progress, this became more of a routine operation. We have a special task force, crisis task force, that is set up when such an event occurs, in the State Department. We are there in force, four, five, six people twenty-four hours a day. So it was an all-consuming task for me and for about a dozen other people; I'm talking about McGeorge Bundy and Tom Mann, the Secretary, Mr. Ball, Kennedy Crockett, who was the man in charge of the Dominican Republic affairs in the State Department who is currently our ambassador to Nicaragua, Bill Bowdler, who is the special assistant for Latin American affairs for Bundy and later Rostow, and we just worked at it all the time.

F: Did you get the feeling that Juan Bosch was politically undesirable, or simply that he lacked the strength to contain the situation?

V: I had the feeling that President Bosch was continuing the same pattern that had been established years before, the pattern that emerged so clearly when he was president, the seven months that he was president, that he is a philosopher and a democrat and a very fine man, but as a politician and as a manager, somebody who can make decisions and lead, he is not as outstanding. And it comes off to the outside observer as being wishy-washy, undecided as to how to move, and whether he can get people to follow him. So the question as to whether he could have straightened things out during that period or pulled things together was great in everyone's mind, especially mine.

F: He had a certain symbolic position to many Dominicans as well as other people in the general area. Did you make any attempt to inform him of developments, or did you pretty well leave him out of it?

V: He was very fully informed of developments during that crisis time when he was in Puerto Rico. He did and does have a symbolic value there. I suspect that by the time he left office it was somewhat eroded. At the time he came home to assume the presidency as a hero and as a liberal and as the first real democrat they had ever had as their president, I think hopes were very high, but in the ensuing months when he was president, the lack of progress, and lack of leadership and decision became very apparent, and I think at the time he was overthrown in September of '63, that there was much less excitement about his ability to bring the country to democracy.

F: Kind of a latter-day Francisco Madero.

V: Yes, sir.

F: Did you get caught up in the Operation Camelot problem in Chile?

V: Not really caught up in the sense that--

F: Did you get unscrambled in it, then?

V: No, in the sense that I was in a way involved in bringing this up to light--I was completely sympathetic with Ambassador Dungan in his indignation that such a thing could happen without everybody being involved. This almost goes back to the old Panama triumvirate we were talking about where the State Department, the governor and the general are informing each other and carrying out their own projects, and I think that, looking back on this, it was very beneficial to all concerned and it cleared the air, now we know. And I was a strong supporter of Dungan in exposing this and rectifying it.

F: Did you think that President Johnson had any considerable prior understanding of what was going on with Operation Camelot?

V: No, sir, I don't believe he did.

F: It operated without having to be cleared through him. Did you have any contact with him or were you privy to any of his relationship with Ambassador Dungan during this period?

V: No, I was not aware that there was private correspondence going on. I think that we all felt that this kind of activity was unwarranted, that it was not in our interests, and that it had to be something that was open and better understood and cleared all across the board before it could be undertaken with impunity.

F: Did this coinciding to a certain extent with the Dominican crisis, did these two events give you Alliance problems?

V: No, only in Chile.

F: Otherwise things went on.

V: Yes.

F: How did you handle the Chilean situation?

V: Well, there was certain indignation there, although they had been aware of the project. It suffered from having a funny pseudo-scientific title, you know, as to what the objective was, but I think that both sides heaved a sigh of relief when it was surfaced and looked at and scraped. I don't think there was any feeling that it would be very valuable for either side.

F: How did you happen to be one of the turnovers in the assistant secretaryship, to move on to something else?

V: This occurred when OEO became so large and such an important agency in our government and it was clear that it was unfair to ask one man to handle both the Peace Corps and OEO. Mr. Shriver was spending a day or a day and a half at the most here in the Peace Corps, and there began to build a certain amount of pressure and criticism

in Congress that he shouldn't be called upon to do both jobs, and it was decided in short order that he would be replaced here. I was not privy to the discussions. I was having lunch in Georgetown when I got a call from the White House, and the President asked me if I would be interested in this job. And you can imagine my answer. He asked me if I could see--

F: He asked you directly?

V: Yes. He asked me if I could foresee any problem of personalities or difficulties of any kind. He asked me what I thought of Lincoln Gordon as my replacement. And he then said, "Don't mention this to anybody. I'll be back to you in short time." This was about one-thirty or two o'clock. I had an appointment on the Hill right after lunch, and as I finished that appointment and drove back to the State Department, my car went down the basement and the guard stopped me and said, "Go back to the White House immediately and go in the back door." This was less than three hours later after the luncheon phone call. I went into the White House and noticed a big crowd of newsmen, TV cameras and the rest. I walked into Bill Moyers' office and he was typing the President's statement he was going to read. And Sarge Shriver was there looking very dejected. And I gulped and realized that it was happening right then. So in terms of my knowledge of this, it all happened in an afternoon.

F: Was Gordon there?

V: No. Gordon was in the states, but I think he was on vacation.

F: Was his appointment announced at the same time?

V: I don't believe it was announced for two or three days, but I think agreement had been reached, but it just wasn't announced.

F: The President usually likes to wrap these things up as to who is moving in where and not leave any vacant slots.

V: Yes. I may be wrong, but as I recall it it was announced two or three days later.

F: Do you think that Sargent Shriver was reluctant to give up the job?

V: Yes, for sentimental and a lot of other reasons; he liked it, he started it, he did so well. And yet it was getting close to the five-year period and he had insisted on this particular provision being in our legislation, that no staff member can serve in the Peace Corps for longer than five years. His five years were up in , let's see, the first of March of '66, you see, so it was approaching that time. But I think he was very sorry to leave, and a lot of people here were sorry to see him go, although there wasn't all that much of a run on the bank among senior staff when he left.

F: Have you had a problem with the Shriver image carry-over?

V: Well, I don't think you can call it a problem. I still, when I go abroad, am met by people who say, "I knew Sargent Shriver," or "Did you replace Sargent Shriver?" or even calling me Mr. Shriver, that's not a problem, but--

F: But there has been no functional problem?

V: Absolutely none. I have had serious differences on administrative matters and programming and many other things and changes that I have made, partly because we have different styles, partly because this is a different period in Peace Corps history, where so much of the early Peace Corps had to do with convincing people, publicity, dramatizing the need, getting applicants, and so forth; well, that was done and done beautifully. Sarge used to tell me that his

philosophy was to combine two words. He said, "I want to make a constant tie between Peace Corps and success, success and Peace Corps, Peace Corps, success; that's the theme I'm going to hit." And like self-fulfilling prophesies, it was successful, far beyond the dreams of most of us. And then after that had been done and the establishment and the image and the concept implanted, then we had to get down and make sure that underneath the operations were as good as we said they were. So that's been my job the past three years, and so we have had some really astounding changes from what we did in the early days, that you wouldn't believe, none of which is especially newsworthy but we have made since--

F: For instance?

V: For instance, in language training, the point you were interested in earlier. I was almost fired from the Peace Corps in 1961 for insisting that we have a minimum of fifty hours of language training. And now routinely we have a minimum of 350.

F: At the beginning knowledge of the local language was not deemed of prime importance?

V: Not at all, not even of minor importance. It could be supplanted by technical studies or cross-cultural studies or anything else, and in many cases they just ended up with twenty or twenty-five hours. So from fifty hours minimum to 350 minimum, I don't know what the percentage increase is, but that gives you an idea. The part of training in country and practical training, getting off the university campus and going into a simulated situation or a real situation and let me give you this example. We were sending volunteers in 1961 to, say, Ghana. They would have been trained entirely on

a U.S. campus, living in air-conditioned dormitories and no Ghanians around, very little if any language, very little if any practical experience or teaching. Today we send them to the Virgin Islands and six or eight weeks are spent practice teaching in a West Indian school where from the point of view of climate, language, culture, food, everything, the school system, the British system, if they can do that, they are home free. You know, they never left home when they get to Ghana. Just a whole different flavor.

F: Sargent Shriver served both presidents devotedly, but did you inherit sort of a Kennedy versus Johnson situation among your employees?

V: If I did, it was never surfaced; it never became overt.

F: There was no tension there that gave you any problems in getting on with your program?

V: No, and I think the saving grace here was the fact that President Johnson has been our first national advisory council chairman. He was tied into Peace Corps from the beginning. Maybe more importantly it was President Johnson who salvaged the Peace Corps from its doomed status of being a sub-agency of AID. President Kennedy had agreed that the Peace Corps would be a sub-agency of AID. Mr. Shriver almost in desperation went to the Vice President and said, "You can't do this. We can't succeed, we can't innovate, we can't be ourselves as a sub-agency of anything or anyone. Won't you please see if you can get us established as a semi-autonomous agency within the State Department umbrella or under it?" And he did. It was the Vice President who was instrumental in getting the Peace Corps established as it now is. We all know that--

F: How do you think he did it?

V: Through lobbying and talking to congressmen and working with the head of AID and Secretary Rusk.

F: Didn't this bring him in conflict with President Kennedy?

V: I think that President Kennedy felt that it wasn't worth fighting, that the issue wasn't all that important.

F: And if Johnson wanted to work at it, he could.

V: Yes. That Shriver said, I think he put it in terms of a new wine requiring a new bottle, and I'm not sure that President Kennedy felt it was all that important to make a major issue of and fight it through. But I don't think it resulted in any conflict, but it did result in kind of affinity or identification with the Vice President which has continued, and he has always been from the first day very decent.

F: When he was chairman of your advisory committee, was this an active committee, did he give active leadership?

V: Yes, he did, more so than Vice President Humphrey has. And Vice President Humphrey is totally committed to Peace Corps and has talked about it in most of his speeches, but with regard to participation in this way I don't think he has ever attended a meeting.

F: Did you know Bill Moyers when you were the regional director?

V: I did. I met Bill for the first time when he came with the Vice President to Senegal, in 1961. I consider him one of my best friends. I see him still today.

F: Was Moyers influential in early Peace Corps policy? Did you, for instance, have much relationship with him?

V: Yes. I think that Moyers was more influential in early Peace Corps policy than anybody other than Shriver; maybe that's overstating it,

maybe Wiggins and Moyers had about the same influence, but he was one of the key people and one of the most respected. And was just right as deputy director. He balanced Shriver beautifully.

F: I was going to ask, from your vantage point in those days, was there any charge that Shriver was Kennedy's man, and Moyers was Johnson's man to check on the Kennedy man? Or did they work in tandem rather well?

V: I always had the impression that they worked beautifully together, that there was a mutual admiration society going on. I don't think that Shriver ever suspected that that was the case, that he was a Johnson plant to keep an eye on, to bring balance to this operation, and to be a source of information, because there is every indication that Johnson, from an early point, had the fullest confidence in Shriver. They communicated well together, and I have seen them together on a number of occasions and could see the easy way they have with each other. So I don't feel there is any suspicion there at all on the part of the President.

F: Did the switch after November 22, 1963, from one President to another make much of a difference in the impetus of the Peace Corps?

V: None at all. By '63 the Peace Corps was so well established, was airborne, that it would have taken something very special to derail it. I guess you don't derail something that is airborne, but it was going and recognized and most of the congressional problems had disappeared. So there wasn't really much of a change at all, same staff and same style and Shriver was very pleased having this as a full-time job.

F: Did this hold true, do you think, for the Alliance also?

V: No. That's quite a different story.

F: How did you shift in the Alliance?

V: Well, the Alliance got off to a staggering start with a great deal of rhetoric, a great deal of enthusiasm, but not a very realistic scheme and in the promises where there were talking about immediate accomplishments, they were talking about the decade of development, and it was more, I think, a dream and a philosophy than it was an operating program. Some say that the Alliance never did get off the ground; it certainly didn't during President Kennedy's lifetime, it never did. The pipeline couldn't be filled in that short a time. The problems to which the Alliance was being addressed were problems that had existed for centuries and that couldn't conceivably be remedied in three, four, five, years. So we should have been talking about fifty years, I guess, and made our commitment, made our decisions and plans along those lines. But it has been, I would say, oversold, underfinanced, poorly-staffed, not as democratic as it might have been.

F: In what way do you--

V: Well, mainly that it is made in America. Dick Goodwin coined the phrase and the coordinator for the Alliance for Progress was an American. Most of the money from the public sector came from us; it was programmed by us, submitted to our Congress and approved by us, and up until the time of approval is secret, you couldn't even discuss this with your host. So it was--I'm not saying it was unilateral--

F: To a certain extent it was imposed.

V: I'm saying it was imposed and lopsided. And on this basis I don't

think that it had a chance of being a full-blown Alliance. The most exciting development has been the growing prestige and involvement of the Inter-American Development Bank and a larger percentage of the funds we provide are channeled through this. And the second most exciting development has been the Partners of the Alliance where cities and states team up with Latin American cities and states and countries and do great things.

F: Was this Alliance initiated or did this come as a dream of, particularly, Jim Boren?

V: This grew from an idea whose source is very hard to trace. Eddie Marcus has been very active in it. Jim Boren has been the glue that has kept it going, but it is so on target, I think, so relevant. For example, if we are going to deal with a country in Latin America in terms of education, the federal government has nothing to offer them. What is relevant to them is the state or even the city educational system, that's where the comparability lies, not in HEW. HEW has nothing to offer El Salvador in terms of education or other things. So this is why I think that the Partners of the Alliance Program has so much relevance and such a great future. I think it is pathetic that we haven't put more resources and energy into that.

F: This is moving up, but have you encouraged the formation of a Peace Corps for other countries, the Peace Corps idea?

V: This has been one of the more substantial things that has happened in the past three years. We not only have encouraged but have abetted any number of countries in doing this. There are now--

F: You don't feel competitive in it?

V: No, no. On the contrary we share everything we know with them. We

have a device called the International Secretariat of Volunteer Service, a group here in Washington, multi-lateral in nature, open, that trade secrets pass through in all directions, and now we have forty-two countries who export volunteers. It is a major movement in the world, it is a crusade, and we have stimulated this, we have put money into it, we help, assist in any way we can, and there is no element of competition here whatsoever, in a given country or worldwide. We just say, "We think that volunteerism is a major source of talent and is a major resource in development and progress, and we've got to do better. We can help you.

F: Do you clear with each other where the volunteers should go? In other words, you're in Ghana. Would you let the Swedes put someone in Ghana, too?

V: We would encourage them to do it.

F: And the two of you would be--

V: We have no real role in this other than sharing information, but in some countries where we operate there are as many as seven or eight other countries. For example, in Turkey, Iran, Ethiopia, India, there are several other groups, and some of them do better than we do.

F: Am I right in recalling that originally Turkey was a bit reluctant to have any kind of Peace Corps participation at all?

V: I don't think they were reluctant. There have been a few problems over the years, but that is true of every Peace Corps country. But I was not aware that they were reluctant early. We have had a major program there ever since.

V: There is, I think, generally not much of an association made between the Peace Corps and President Johnson. And I wish this could be changed. But I wanted to record that he has been very interested, greatly concerned, most supportive of everything we have done and has been helpful in keeping the Peace Corps an autonomous, independent, swinging kind of operation that is different. And among the things that he has done, perhaps the most significant, tangible, has been his promotion of our school partnership program, called the school-to-school program. He said two years ago that he would like us to expand this pilot project which was and today is financed by contributions from school children all over the United States to a thousand schools as the target. We have been hard at work on this and at the present time over seven hundred schools have been built around the world, a maximum cost of $1,000. As the commercial people would say, the equivalent value, if it were done on a contract basis, might be $5,000 or $10,000 or $15,000.

But what we do is through the eyes of a volunteer spot a community that has never had a school in its history. And to get the townspeople together and organized and committed to providing all available local resources to do this; I'm talking about contribution of the land, all of the labor, all of the locally available building materials, guaranteeing a teacher and so forth. With this kind of commitment and involvement on the part of the townspeople, $1,000 in buying certain things, reinforcing steel and

door frames and window frames, cement, can result in a fine modern two, three or even four room schoolhouse. This isn't the only part. An added benefit is the contact that is established between the sponsoring, say, junior high school and the group abroad.

F: Is it a specific school for a specific school?

V: Yes.

F: So that some school in Mankato, Minnesota would know which school in what country was--

V: And on that basis they can trade, artifacts, art, letters, music, anything. The volunteer who supervise and monitor the construction of the school very frequently comes back to the sponsoring school and spends a day or two talking to students about what they did, what their contributions made possible. And pen pals and educational process occurs. But just as significantly is the fact that so often this becomes as the most substantial construction, the most substantial structure, in that community. It becomes a rallying point, it becomes a civic center, a social center, athletic center, a P.T.A. is established then; it becomes the most important institution in the broad sense in that community. Well, we are talking about seven hundred schools plus that have already been built. I expect that by the end of next year we will have reached President Johnson's target of a thousand schools, and it has been a little uneven in the sense that some countries, like Tanzania, who received fifty-five or sixty schools; in others there is just one. But wherever it is when it is done right it's been a beautiful thing, where the youngsters for the first time have a school to go to, at least without having to walk ten miles, and it brings then a notch closer to the modern world

and gives them the basis for the democratic process to start. So had he done nothing else for us, this stimulation, promotion, of the school partnership program would have been a major credit for President Johnson, and I hope that someday when this is done or when it has reached astronomical proportions, like ten or fifteen thousand schools, that he will be given due credit for this, for his role in making this all possible.

F: Did he send down a directive on this, or did this just grow out of conferences; how did it happen to get under way?

V: This happened in a speech he made, and it happened further in his insisting that this be included in our legislation. You see, we have to have a small office here to manage this, to match request with the donor contribution, and to do the follow-up and put the people in contact and monitoring and sending a model plan, an architectural blueprint designs for these schools in different kinds of terrain and climate and so forth. And to get authorization for this we had to include it in our request to Congress which he promoted and helped get across for us.

F: The United States has just about every type of culture in its geography--swamp culture to desert and mountain and so on; do you try to match cultures in this interchange? What I am trying to get at, I am in--let's stick with Mankato--junior high, we want to get to work on this; what initiative do we have, what choice do we have in choosing the country to be aided or the community within the country?

V: With regard to the choice of country, that's easy; you have full range. It could be that we have never built a school in the country

where you want, you as Mankato junior high school would like to build a school. And this could probably be arranged. With regard to the community where this would happen, there is less of a choice. What would happen here is that you would be given a range, you know, the names of twenty villages where this was ready to happen.

F: It is quite likely that you would have never heard of those communities anyhow.

V: That's right. The first, I remember so well, the first pilot effort that I was involved in deeply in 1963 was in Casa Blanca, Colombia. We didn't have any clue as to how to do this, technically, financially, organizationally, nothing. It seems--it must have cost us $3,000 to build this first school, and it took about three years. But we learned all these lessons--and the next one was less cumbersome and delayed. It took about a year and a half, and cost almost $2,000. But we worked it out to the point where we were building them in six months at a cost of $1,000 or $800.

F: You are getting more efficient all the time. Well, you must have been to some of these dedications.

V: I've been to dozens. In fact, in Panama I have been to, I guess, five. I recall one time when I was assistant secretary I went to an inauguration with President Robles, and it was in a town called Roble (sp) which means "oak". He made a little speech and when he finished, one of the school teachers came up to him rather critically and said, "Mr. President, if it's the city school, the government does it by contract, and you build this elegant school and the local people don't have to contribute anything, but here for this school we poor people have been required to furnish all the labor, the land,

and so forth. Don't you think that that's discrimination against the poor rural people?" And Robles smiled and said, "I wish you could understand the difference. In Panama City these big schools that are given to the people, don't belong to the people, and they don't take care of them. In two years they look like they are twenty years old. They are torn up and defaced and there is no pride in the community. But where you build a school, it's your sweat, it's your money and your time. Look at this school. It's the prettiest school I've ever seen, beautifully attended, beautifully landscaped, with nice shrubs and flowers around it. That's the difference. And I just wish we could build all schools on this basis."

F: You must have seen some enormous evidences of local pride, which I think is important.

V: And especially when you see this structure that's in brick or adobe or better surrounded by houses that are thatch roofed and mud and have a dirt floor, you know, the contrast, there is something to be proud of, because this is the first physical indication that you are getting close to the modern world, that you belong, that you can have dignity. So it is a starter.

F: It gives you a social center, too, doesn't it?

V: Yes.

F: Or a civic center. Did Mr. Johnson push this when he was chairman of the advisory commission?

V: No, he pushed this when he was president. This was two years ago. And I don't know if he's aware today of how fast it has gone, but there have been over three hundred and fifty schools built the past year.

F: For my own information, I don't think this program is as widely known

as it might be, how do you get word to schools--I'm talking about United States schools--that they can participate in this program. In other words, how is the contact made from here to there?

V: We do it in several ways. We work through the political system. For example, Governor Romney spearheaded a drive for funds for us in Michigan last year, and we received more than $50,000, which means that more than fifty schools can be built. We do it through the state educational system; we do it through our campus recruiters who go out and talk to a high school or junior high school about Peace Corps and mention this. We do it through a mailing campaign where we have a very attractive, fully descriptive brochure that tells the whole story that we send out to schools and to school systems and school superintendents and the like. And I agree that it isn't widely enough known, but in certain states and certain instances we have had not only broad coverage but a commitment to do this every year one way or another, and you would be amazed at the way that some of the youngsters get up the money. I recall one fellow writing, he sent in two hundred and fifty or three hundred dollars, a counselor or superintendent, and he said, "Over half of this money was obtained through deer skinning." This was upper New York state; the fellows during the hunting season go out and skin deer for the lucky hunters and get whatever they get, $3, $4, $5, and have donated this.

F: What has Vietnam done to your Peace Corps actualities and prospects?

V: Vietnam has brought controversy; Vietnam has highlighted the need to find some way to achieve peace; Vietnam has highlighted the dangers that any kind of war of it leading to total war, whatever that would

mean, like the end of mankind. It's hard to generalize as to what it has done. Some have said that it has hurt recruiting; I suspect it hasn't. There have been no indications that it has. Some have said that it has helped recruiting because so many young men are trying to find ways to avoid going to Vietnam, and Peace Corps is an obvious channel of at least postponing going into the military. Well, this hasn't happened either. We have the same ratio of male to female over the years.

F: You would deny the sometimes published charge that Peace Corps is a draft-dodging agency?

V: For sure. In the first place a man is not exempt if he goes into Peace Corps; he is just deferred. And if he's close to twenty-six, he probably won't be deferred by his draft board to do Peace Corps service. I have no doubt that many young men who go into the Peace Corps would prefer to do this to going into the armed forces from which you could, I think, conclude that this is part of their motivation, to draft avoidance or draft postponement. I wouldn't deny this, but most volunteers come in with mixed motives, partly idealism, partly self-interest, partly romance, partly to postpone the day of going into the military, maybe, and a lot of other reasons, and I suspect, too, that many don't have any idea why they are going into the Peace Corps and will know five years from now, which is one of the great appeals to me.

F: Have you had Peace Corps long enough now to make some evaluation of what becomes of Peace Corps people?

V: Yes. We have a very clear indication; the trends are there, and they haven't varied much. We find that although about 90 percent already

have a university degree when they enter the Peace Corps, almost half the volunteers when they return go back to school to get an advanced degree. The next largest percentage, about 40 [percent], go into something that has to do with service to fellow man, mainly teaching. They have been hundreds and hundreds of former volunteers who have gone into our inter-city ghetto schools, and they do superbly. They are willing to live there, they don't commute out to the suburbs; they stay there and fight it out. There have been so many go into OEO-type operations; in fact, I think you can make the case that Sargent Shriver would not have been able to start OEO had it not been for Peace Corps. The direction and the key jobs have been provided by former Peace Corps volunteers and staff. The man who started VISTA was a former Peace Corps director in Thailand. The man in charge of VISTA today is a former Peace Corps man. And all down the line; the man in charge of Teacher Corps is a former Peace Corps director in Tunisia. Shriver himself; the man in charge of Job Corps is the former director of contracts of Peace Corps.

So in a sense, and this may be overstating it some, you can make the case that Peace Corps made our own war on poverty possible, and in some cases already successful. But service seems to be the thing. We have many who go into diplomacy, to AID, U.S.I.A. We have had about three hundred and fifty go to Vietnam in a civilian capacity, and have done better than the pack. I've had several letters from commanders and supervisors in Vietnam pointing out that former Peace Coprs volunteers are far superior to the other contract people they have. They are self-starters, they

get along better with the host people, they give more importance to learning the language, they have a confidence and an ability to get the things done that is, in their words, unique. So it is not just the two years, obviously, Joe, but it's whatever the life of this person might be, forty years more, fifty years more, after Peace Corps service. But it's pointing them in a direction. That's what it does. It excites them and opens their eyes. We have had congressmen who have said, mistakenly, that we were being unpatriotic to take these fine young teachers out of the United States when we needed them so badly. The fact is that we give to our society four or five teachers for every one we take because, let's take the typical Peace Corps volunteer who will be an AB generalist, as we call them from an outstanding school, Princeton, Oberlin, Stanford. At that point when they enter the Peace Corps they have a very low opinion of, say, junior high school teachers. They say there is no future, no salary, no status, no excitement. They go into the Peace Corps and become a Peace Corps volunteer teacher and they come back and they say, "I want to get my teacher's certificate. I want to get a masters degree in education because I'm going to be a junior high school teacher." There is no greater favor in my view that can be done our society than to bring these high quality, high thyroid young adults back to be school teachers in our society for the next twenty-five years.

F: Good.

V: Thank you.

[End of Tape 2 of 2 and Interview I]

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON LIBRARY

Legal Agreement Pertaining to the Oral History Interview of

JACK H. VAUGHN

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, **Jack H. Vaughn**, of Tucson, Arizona, do hereby give, donate and convey to the United States of America all my rights, title and interest in the tape recording and transcript of the personal interview conducted on December 4, 1968 in Washington, D.C., and prepared for deposit in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

This assignment is subject to the following terms and conditions:

(1) The transcript shall be available for use by researchers as soon as it has been deposited in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

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

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

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

(5) Copies of the transcript and tape recording may be deposited in or loaned to institutions other than the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

Jack H. Vaughn
Donor

June 20, 1993
Date

Acting Cindy Huckamp Peterson
Archivist of the United States

August 24, 1993
Date