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INTERVIEWEE: ROBERT WOODWARD

INTERVIEWER: PAIGE E. MULHOLLAN

November 4, 1968

M: If you would like to, just make a general statement of principle or services here. This would be a good way to start, probably.

W: Well, in the first place, trying to get to the most fundamental points and to consider these questions as seriously as possibly, my personal feeling is that President Johnson has been almost a genius in promoting the domestic welfare in the United States. In fact, it is a rather sad commentary to see that his having promoted equality and civil rights and making an effort as he has to promote legislation that would result in greater educational opportunities for those who haven't had them and a general improvement of the conditions, the productivity, and the status as eventual consumers of the part of the population, of our population in the United States, which hasn't heretofore been a real asset to the economy as such, has gone so fast that it is now taking the country a regrettable amount of time and effort to digest this. And this in a sense is the reason for the reaction, of the great emphasis being placed upon law and order in this election campaign, and the disinclination to see the turmoil that has sprouted out here and there as simply an evidence of change which really is an extremely welcome change on the whole, and which indicates a new sense of being a person, of individuality, and of actually being a part of the community on the part of a great many people who heretofore have not been. And behind those few who are so impatient that they riot and steal from stores in the process, there are

literally millions who are making orderly, steady progress in a way which will eventually be revealed to the credit of President Johnson and his Administration.

So therefore I have a very great admiration for what he has accomplished domestically in the last four years. And this is one of the reasons, this is the principal reason, why I consider myself a Democrat and why I'll vote for the Democratic Party, virtually regardless of who the candidate is. And in this case the candidate happens to be a man that I like and admire very much [Hubert Humphrey], partly from sentimental origins because we're both from the State of Minnesota.

M: I was going to ask you about that. Incidentally don't let the questions that I ask limit you. If you want to ramble around and talk about any experience that you have had with Hubert Humphrey, feel free to do that as well.

W: Well, since the Vice President has had the heavier responsibilities of national office, higher than that of Senator, I've had very little personal relationship with him, but I've still regarded him from afar with admiration and think that he would be the best President of any of the three candidates.

Now, this is all to provide a background of things that I am going to say about the conduct of foreign relations, which has been my life work. There are two things about the handling of foreign relations in the United States that preoccupy me. To say that I am worried about them is not exactly accurate, because I think that they're such an integral part of our national life--these two aspects that I am going to mention--that to change them might change other things that are fundamental and good about our national life.

The first and most fundamental aspect of the conduct of foreign relations that preoccupies me is that our foreign relations are those of thousands of different institutions, companies, organizations, and various parts of the United States government. Not only does this make the job of trying to give a consistency and coordination on the main elements of policy and decisions a very difficult problem, but it often results in one consideration--the consideration of one of these very diverse entities that are conducting foreign relations and maintaining the relations--it results in the concerns of one entity sometimes being given a disproportionate weight. And often for a purely domestic, or largely domestic consideration, actions will be taken in foreign relations which have quite a serious effect upon other aspects of our foreign relations in a way that is in our system almost unavoidable.

Now to take a relatively simple example of this, we have a very large number of trade relationships--some of them pretty highly generalized, some of them with particular countries. There has grown up because of our policy of trying to reduce duties, there has grown up a system of quotas, which is a substitute for protectionism.

M: Quotas on imports?

W: On imports, on individual commodities. Now one of those commodities is textiles. We on the whole are very liberal in permitting the importation of large quantities of textiles from foreign countries, even though many of these textiles are types that are produced in our own country. But in order to keep them down to something reasonable and not hurt domestic interests too much, causing labor problems, causing all kinds of economic problems in our own country, we work out individual deals with particular countries that are large producers and suppliers of these products. And

there's a rather intricate system of quotas in this product. The same system exists in connection with other products. Now this is a simple example, and perhaps not a very good one, but it shows how one needs to make the arrangements with individual countries so as not to damage some other more important relationship that may exist with the United States. Often individual business firms will ask the United States government to go to bat for them, and naturally the United States government and its representatives try to do everything possible to be of assistance in seeing that American interests get fair treatment and that they prosper within the bounds of reasonable competition and justice and so forth. Sometimes actions, particularly in the past, have been taken to help individual firms which have prejudiced our relationships with foreign governments in other matters. Fortunately there has been an improvement in this.

But as I mention these examples, the point I want to make most of all is that in every country and particularly in big countries there is a great web of relationships, and a very large portion of these relationships is either very constructive in that they are mutually beneficial to the two countries, to our country and to the foreign country, or they have the potential for being mutually beneficial. Only a few of them are harmful.

Now I come to the second thing that preoccupies me when I talk about the extremely difficult task of coordinating those relationships. To try to make not only the most sense and to coordinate these insofar as is possible, but also to try to find methods of utilizing all of those various interests to promote the maximum beneficial relationship both to our country and to the foreign country, requires representatives who have had a vast amount of experience and practice and going from place to place and meeting a new situation after having had the experience of a preceding

situation. The representative gradually acquires greater skill in doing this, knows how to better judge the constructiveness of the interests, knows how to give them encouragement without being presumptuous and without intervening and interfering in his relationship with the people who are handling that particular interest; and, at the same time [he] has acquired cumulatively a great familiarity with all of the agencies of the United States government which might be able to give some help here and there and thus realize to a great extent the potential of these relationships. Now this is speaking in very general terms, but these things are terribly concrete and they vary from country to country. In some countries there are missionary organizations galore, and in some countries there are great business interests and trade interests. In every country there is an interest of the press association--that is, exchanging information. In every country the movie industry--the United States movie industry--is a very significant activity and influences the thinking of people a great deal. In almost every country there is some movement of translations of United States books into the foreign language. One can go on to pick out concrete interests: there are the transportation companies, the airlines coming into--

M: Excuse me, these are all--the ones you've mentioned and presumably most of the ones that would be mentioned in this connection, are private interests.

W: Private interests, yes.

M: Are they normally in your experience amenable to government representatives' suggestions in regard to their operations in these areas, or do they pretty well pursue an independent course without too much regard to the representatives on the scene may say?

W: This is precisely the difference between having an extremely skillful United

States government representative and having one who is, no matter how intelligent and capable, basically an amateur. And these people [the interests] usually will become very amenable to suggestions and encouragement and in some cases actual inspiration on the part of the United States government representative who shows an appreciation for what they are trying to do, and for what they are trying to do that seems constructive so that they'll do it better. In other words, all of these United States' interests can become to a rather surprising degree coordinated under the aegis of a very skillful person who does it through friendship and through what you might call the gentle exchange of ideas, without high pressure and does it with what might be described as the soft-sell. There are great responsibilities in this. Now of course this goes without saying in connection with the agencies of the United States government, where in many cases there are literally dozens of them. In the Embassy in London, as an example, there must be thirty U. S. government agencies represented.

M: I read somewhere that in a typical embassy, eighty percent of the people working there would not be working for the State Department. I've forgotten whose figures those were, but that's an example--

W: That's not at all unusual. Well, of course, in such unusual situations as Viet Nam, that's very much the case. Usually when that's true, it's where there is a large aid program, or where there are U. S. military bases.

M: Well, then the non-State Department agencies become in a way the same kind of independent interests that you were referring to in regard to business interests, missionary interests, and this type of thing too, I expect.

W: Yes. Naturally they're not officially described as independent; and President Eisenhower, President Kennedy, and President Johnson each have

made declarations or statements to United States Ambassadors abroad, telling them that they are in charge of all operations except military--where there are military forces in the foreign country those military forces are responsible directly to the Secretary of Defense and the Commander-in-Chief, although there is supposed to be very close coordination.

Now President Johnson did take one step in connection with this kind of statement, which was very helpful. And that is that he asked the heads of the other agencies of the government to send this statement out to their own representatives. Theretofore, it had been sent out to the State Department man, and he was supposed to get the idea across to the representatives of other agencies. The President did not take the trouble before to send this statement, say, out through the Secretary of Defense, through the Secretary of Commerce, through the Secretary of Transportation, for FAA representatives, and so forth and so on.

Now you'd be surprised how much difference it makes when the heads of the other agencies get the word on a thing of this kind from the man to whom they consider themselves responsible. They naturally always think of the avenue of the pay check, and they're responsible to the agency for which they work. And so that unless they get these instructions from headquarters, they have tongue-in-cheek with respect to their responsibility to the American Ambassador abroad.

But regardless of the degree of official responsibility, the real responsibility comes about through a friendly, working relationship--a relationship in which the Ambassador and his staff and the representatives of the other agencies are all mutually informed, each of what the other is doing, and take an interest in what the other is doing, a sympathetic interest, and encourage--the Ambassador in particular encourages--what he

considers to be the most constructive and important things that the other agency is doing. It's a great deal like the relationship with totally independent interests outside of the official government family. And so you are correct in saying that there is a certain resemblance in this, although according to the statements that go out from headquarters, the Ambassador is completely in charge of the operation of other agencies.

M: Sometimes the reality is not the theory though. Some Ambassadors, I believe, have complained that they couldn't be masters in their own house. Is this typical or frequent?

W: Well, it has been my observation that unless one obtains the cooperation of the representatives of other agencies through friendly interest and real personal confidence, and very close mutual information, that there is always the possibility that the lines of coordination begin to stray apart. And occasionally this can result in something which is rather dramatically inconsistent. I'm glad to say that I rarely have [had] occasion to complain about things going that far, nor have I had any real complaint because I work very hard to win the confidence of the heads of other agencies as well as the heads of other organizations that were representing American interests.

M: Non-governmental?

W: Non-governmental, yes. There are mechanisms worked out for threshing out differences of opinion, and naturally the head of another agency is always entitled to send to Washington his point of view on something where he feels he's being pressed into something by the Ambassador; and the Ambassador ostensibly has the right to send someone home, which of course would be a very drastic solution for any problem of lack of coordination and which the Ambassador would avail himself of only in the most extreme instances

because it's extremely costly to him to do that in terms of his relationships not only with that particular agency, but with all other agencies. Because that then puts his relationship on a totally different basis, one of arbitrary authority; this can be disastrous because the heads of other agencies and their employees can find a hundred ways of dissimilating, perhaps a lot of it unconscious, so that actually the coordination gradually begins to fall apart.

Well, anyhow, I've talked about this problem of coordination without clearly mentioning the second preoccupation. And that is that we are not fully taking advantage in our foreign relations of either the needs or opportunities for this type of coordination because of the lack of a scientific selection of our representatives abroad.

M: Do you mean original selection, Mr. Woodward, or assignment?

W: I mean the original selection of our top representatives abroad. There has long been a kind of rule of thumb that approximately two-thirds of the principal representatives, the Ambassadors, in the one hundred twenty countries where we have relations will be from the career service; and the other one-third will be people who have been selected personally by the White House, presumably in large part by the President himself. Now, I'm not making an argument on behalf of the career service as such, but only upon the need for the type of man who has had the experience that will equip him to carry out the function that I have tried to describe to you. And about the only way that a person can get that experience, the experience which cumulatively will make him capable of doing this in the most important countries--countries where we have the most important and crucial relationships--is through having had a series of assignments. First, an assignment as a Chief of Mission or Ambassador. Now this means that it's

extremely important that even the embassies which seem to be the most insignificant not be given away carelessly to people as rewards for useful service in some totally different branch of activity, without regard for the fact that these are very necessary places. Often of course they can be very important in themselves unexpectedly. But they're very important as places in which the man who is going to go on to a more important place can get the experience which will accumulate and make him truly able to take advantage of opportunities for the United States.

Now, I had an almost ideal series of opportunities.

M: Your career looks like one of these organizational chart things, the way you progressed from one to another.

W: And I consider myself extremely fortunate. After years of foreign service, I think I had had about twenty-two years, from 1932 to 1954--I was assigned as the Ambassador to Costa Rica. I had an extremely interesting three years there which I think turned out to be very fruitful and very mutually advantageous for the United States and for Costa Rica. I considered myself very lucky on the outcome of my mission there. I was then assigned to Uruguay and had the same kind of experience there in a somewhat more sophisticated and difficult environment. And I stayed there three years, and our relationships worked out extremely well. We had had a series of outstanding problems in our relations with that country, and these problems were all resolved while I was there; and I take considerable pride in the fact that the relationships developed and smoothed out to the extent that they did.

M: This was 1958 to 1961?

W: Yes, as a matter of fact the relationship with the foreign minister who was in office during the last year or year and a half that I was there turned

out later on to be invaluable when the Secretary of State was at a meeting of foreign ministers in Punta del Este.

M: I was going to ask you about Punta del Este--

W: And the truth of the matter is that in a very interesting way the outcome of that Conference of Foreign Ministers turned on the relationship with that foreign minister, who cast the deciding vote on the main issue; and I had the good fortune to be negotiating with him personally along with the Secretary of State and with his advisers on agreeing on the terms by which the Castro government was expelled from the Council of the Organization of American States, thus expressing the incompatibility between the present Cuban government and the system of government in the rest of the western hemisphere.

M: This was done by the casting vote of--

W: The casting vote of that one man.

M: Acting as chairman? Because he was the host, is that correct?

W: Actually it was because we needed just one more vote. We had thirteen votes in favor of this and we got fourteen, and he was the deciding vote. I mean the other thirteen countries all obtained this cooperation from the Uruguayan Foreign Minister who took a very courageous stand on this, because he went contrary to the two big countries on either side of his country which were Argentina and Brazil; they both voted against this measure. I'm simply piecing this in with my own three years in Uruguay.

Then I went very briefly to Chile, and Secretary Rusk telephoned me after I had been there for six weeks and was just getting underway--rather rapidly getting underway, as a matter of fact--and he asked me to come back to Washington to be Assistant Secretary. This was just after the Bay of Pigs. That had occurred in April--

M: This was 1961?

W: 1961, yes.

M: Sometimes I throw simplistic things in here that you and I both know, but for the purpose of people who might not know it so readily in the future.

W: Well, he called me in the middle of June and asked me if I would come back and be Assistant Secretary, so in two weeks I was back here.

M: This was after the Alliance for Progress [was announced]?

W: No, this was just before.

M: Just before it.

W: Before the Alliance for Progress, yes.

M: So you were Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs?

W: Yes, that's how I happened to go to the conference with the Secretary in the following January. I came back to be Assistant Secretary in July of 1961, and the conference to decide on the Alliance for Progress was scheduled for August; therefore, most of the preparatory work had been done, and a few days after I arrived in Washington Assistant Secretary John Leddy, who was then in charge of Economic Affairs [Assistant Secretary of Treasury], and I called in all of the Latin American Ambassadors in Washington and John, who had been I think the principal drafter of the outine of the Alliance for Progress--

M: I'm supposed to talk to him in January. I'm glad to get this information.

W: Yes, he's an extremely capable man. And he, as I say, did frame the language and the ideas of the Alliance for Progress in very large part. He read to the assembled Ambassadors the ideas of the United States on this subject. In August, I went down to the conference with Secretary Dillon, but I had had so little to do with the preparatory work that I was little more than an errand boy for Douglas Dillon, who did a remarkably fine job with the

assistance of John Leddy and Ed Martin, who was I think John Leddy's deputy at that time.

M: Why Dillon, incidentally? He was Secretary of the Treasury then, wasn't he?

W: Yes, he had been Under Secretary of State and because of the peculiar mechanism of the Inter-American Council of Economic and Social Affairs--the Secretary of State has never been the representative on that council, because this council, when it meets on an inter-American basis at a conference, is supposed to have representation of Cabinet level but the economic minister. And since we don't have a minister of economy, since the Secretary of Commerce is concerned with trade but not general economic questions by and large, it has been customary to have the Cabinet officer who seems at the time to be the most qualified and appropriate for that particular function. And sometimes it has been the Secretary of Commerce. But in this case the man who obviously was very well equipped in the economic field; who had been Under Secretary of State, who had therefore a lot of experience with these problems, of course, in his daily work in the State Department; had been Ambassador to France before that; and was now in a Cabinet position, Secretary of the Treasury, and he had taken on the responsibility for leading the organized aspects of the Inter-American economic discussions, so he was the obvious man to lead this delegation.

As a matter of fact, at that time, I believe that John Leddy had already gone over to the Treasury Department to be his Assistant Secretary, having previously been Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs in the State Department.

M: I didn't know that Leddy had done that. He's back in the State Department now.

W: Yes. And I think that Ed Martin had taken his place as Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs. So we had an existing Assistant Secretary of Economic Affairs and a recent one, both assisting Dillon in this question. And the Alliance for Progress worked out very well, I think. I mean the terms of it were worked out very well at that meeting in August of 1961.

Well, to go on with the question of representation. As time went on and we got through with the meeting of foreign ministers in January of 1962, there had been some discussion--I had some discussion--with the Secretary of State and with the Under Secretary and with the head personnel officer in the State Department about the advisability of my going out to the field again, to a post in the field, and another man's taking over as Assistant Secretary, because we had a very peculiar personnel problem. A man who was very close to the President and who had been in the White House and was able to change the decisions on our relations with Latin America through his own personal relationship with the President had been assigned to be my deputy in the State Department. This was Richard Goodwin. And Goodwin and I had a reasonably agreeable working relationship after he came over to the State Department, but he was still prone to take an action from time to time on his own initiative; and sometimes it would be done so quickly that there wouldn't be opportunity to discuss it with him. And we found that we got into a couple of situations which were rather complex and undesirable, and so the Under Secretary of State, who was George Ball, told me quite frankly that he thought that Ed Martin would be able to work out a better coordination of the work with my deputy than I could; that I wasn't firm enough with him.

M: Goodwin was going around channels while he was--he was still writing speeches for Kennedy, wasn't he, at this time?

W: Well yes, and he had such a good personal relationship with President Kennedy that he could call him up on the telephone at any time and discuss things with him, and the President was a very sympathetic person and felt a very real sense of gratitude to Goodwin for his help during the campaign and his speech-writing ability. He was a very speedy speech-writer and particularly with the type of inspirational speeches that the President liked in relation to Latin America. And so he appreciated Goodwin's abilities and at the same time he, too, realized that things were a little uncoordinated. But he would not have taken me to change himself; he was quite satisfied with the arrangements. I was, as a matter of fact, told by his personal assistant Ralph Dungan in the White House that the President was quite satisfied with the way in which we were set up for handling Latin American affairs. But this wasn't well enough coordinated to satisfy the Under Secretary of State and probably the Secretary himself; so it was finally decided that Ed Martin should take this job, and I was of course very glad to take an assignment in the field.

Well, I was very lucky at that time to be assigned to a much more important post than a career officer of what might be considered to be my capacities would normally have had. I would normally never have expected to go to a post as good as Madrid.

M: Was this part of the general policy of the Kennedy Administration to promote career officers to these more important posts, or was this just a special case in your instance?

W: Well, it was due to two considerations: One, I think the President and the Secretary of State and the Under Secretary all felt that I had come in to be Assistant Secretary in a relatively difficult time and that with all of the lack of coordination that may have occurred that we did have some

rather outstanding accomplishments during that short period of eight months in which I held the job; and therefore they wanted to do something they felt would be nice for me. They wanted to reward me.

Secondly, President Kennedy, I think, had much less the feeling that most presidents have that they must harbor these attractive, rather glamorous appearing jobs as rewards for people who have helped them in domestic politics. I think there is quite a feeling that there are only so many glamorous rewards to pass out; the embassies abroad seem glamorous, seem attractive, and therefore men who are very intent, and justifiably intent, on the problems of maintaining political support within the United States and having an organization that will do this to help them, cherish these rewards and would not pass them out lightly to somebody who was a career official. This is a situation which I think our domestic political system makes almost inevitable; and this is a thing which preoccupies someone who has been concentrating in the field of foreign relations because it seems to be an insoluble dilemma.

M: The necessity for experience versus the necessity for domestic political support.

W: Exactly. And one cannot think in terms of the denying--of any law which would deny--the chief executive of the authority to use these jobs in this way; but often enough they are used as rewards, as they were in my case, for people who have labored in the vineyard of foreign affairs.

M: But not as a political account; rather as a career--

W: Career help. And I think a lot of the assignments are made on that basis today. Likely as not you will find if you examine into the background of assignments to important posts abroad--where career men do go to them--in at least half of the instances, you would find that it's not because of

their performance in a job in the foreign service that they were promoted to a more important job in the field, another important job in the foreign service, but because they have performed a difficult job within the eyesight, in my view, of the people in Washington, that is, right here.

M: Take Sargent Shriver for example. Here's an instance where a man performed a lot of important activities and then was rewarded, I suppose.

W: And if all of the one-third, roughly speaking--there are now forty or forty-five percent at the moment--of the Ambassadors who are appointed without regard to previous experience in foreign relations were as capable men and as fine characters and personalities as Sargent Shriver, there would be little to complain about. I don't want to put it on the basis of complaint--I want to put it on the basis of little to be preoccupied about.

M: Well, maybe this would be a good time to describe--You went to Spain in 1962?

W: Yes, I went in the spring of 1962.

M: Perhaps you could just describe your ministry in Spain, the activities that were important to Spain during that time, and the results, solutions, or whatever that came from them.

W: Well, there I think that I had again exceptionally good luck in my mission to Spain. In fact, when I finished, the last thing I did was to send in a report of itemized results of my mission there--itemized numbers from one up to thirty, something of that size. It was rather an impressive array of favorable things that happened during the time I was there, most of which in one way or another the embassy and I personally had had quite a bit to do with. Others were things that had just happily happened during those three years. One of the explanations of this is that my experience had been very largely in Latin America before going to Spain. This not

only gave me the advantage of being rather fluent in the language, but it gave me an approach to this type of helpfulness that I tried to describe to you--an encouragement and putting out lines of personal relationship with all of the people that I thought were doing constructive things that would be of mutual interest to the United States and Spain. And the result was that apparently there was a surprising difference in the tack taken during the time I was there by the embassy, and the customary approach. Because in our relations with European countries, there is more likely to be a conception of the embassy as an instrumentality just between governments, as a liaison for passing on information or exerting persuasion among officials of the other government. Well, I thought of the embassy as being something quite different from this and going well beyond this. What's more, in addition to trying to have a very close personal relationship of mutual information and encouragement and subtle suggestion with the representatives of other U.S. interests in the country, I tried a still further approach which was to show interest in all of those important things which the Spanish government was doing itself that would have a beneficial effect upon the largest numbers of people in Spain. By this, for example, I mean I took greater interest in their social security system; they had a social security system the primary thrust of which was health insurance, which covered half the people in Spain. I don't think that anybody in the American Embassy had ever before taken the trouble to find out about the workings of this sytem, what it did, and to show a real enthusiastic interest in it.

Then the Spanish government was making some very constructive steps in the development of their economy by getting the World Bank to make a thorough analysis and make suggestions on a nationwide economic plan. This

incidentally was a very outstanding example of the usefulness of this multi-national agency, the World Bank, in addition to its normal function of making loans. It gets together a group of experts to respond to the requests of a member country for an analysis of either the entire economy or some aspect of the economy, comes up with a report and specific suggestions very politely but clearly stated. The foreign country then has the advice not from an individual foreign government, but from an international agency that has impartially picked good experts to do it. And this enables the foreign country, without any injury to its pride or independence, to accept these suggestions if it finds them as good as they usually are; and it's an admirable function. And it's something in which the United States representative, as the representative of the country which has a very large interest in the World Bank but which by no means controls the World Bank, has a special problem in trying to give encouragement and to show interest without in any way being presumptuous and giving the impression that he thinks the United States government runs this bank.

M: Which would be easy to do.

W: This is an example of the subtlety which is required, and this is accomplished mostly by being just so friendly and enthusiastic and very careful not to make any presumptuous comments. And it was one of the things that I was very glad to have an opportunity to do, because we were so fortunate that the World Bank making this study. But also in our own aid program, which was being wound up at the time I was there and which had been in effect for ten years since we had first gone into the base arrangements, we had done an amazing number of things to help the Spanish economy. Many of these had been forgotten. I mean that I had a difficult time, as a matter of fact, digging out of the files of the embassy and all the memories of the few

people who had been there long enough to tell me what even the principal projects were. Now, one of the reasons for the difficulty of this is that our system of aiding Spain was largely that of sending them--delivering to them--supplies, mostly agricultural commodities which they badly needed, selling them these products for local currency so that their balance of payments, at a time when their economy was in bad straits, would not be unfavorably affected. Then loaning back to them a very large proportion of the local currency for economic development projects which they were carrying out. And of course the list of economic projects from time to time would be approved by the head of the aid mission; the aid mission usually would consult with the Ambassador when he was approving this, but the Ambassador left this largely to the head of the aid mission, and the aid mission in turn left it largely to the Spanish government to determine what these projects would be. But nevertheless, by this method, we had sunk very large amounts of money; in fact, I think well over in toto, well over four or five hundred, I think about five hundred million dollars in pesetas.

M: This was primarily in local currency so it was not a drain on our balance of payments?

W: It was a drain only upon our accumulation of surpluses of food, although in the early stages of our aid program, we shipped many other products other than food products. We shipped petroleum, we shipped coal and steel for Spanish industries and Spanish railroads where they badly needed this early in the 1950's. Not only did we also receive payment in pesetas for this and in turn loaned these pesetas to the Spanish; but some of the products we actually gave to them--we got no compensation for them; they were just a gift. And this was all, of course, a quid pro quo for the base agreements--

M: The base agreements were originally for ten years?

W: 1953, for ten years. Now let me mention something else though that is extremely important from the viewpoint of the U. S. taxpayer. And that is that there were enough pesetas arising from these sales of commodities which we loaned to the Spanish so that we were able to loan those pesetas back to the Spanish after having paid all the expenses of building the bases, all the local expenses. And the construction of the bases in the 1950's, which was long before I went there, had cost over $300,000,000.

M: All paid out of this--

W: And all of the local costs, I mean things which did not have to be shipped from the United States, all of the local costs were paid by the pesetas arising from our sales of commodities that had gone over in connection with our aid program. So in those cases the only advantage given to the Spanish is that we were able to buy the commodities with the local currency, but this did not add to their balance of payments.

In the case of the others, they got a double advantage. They not only were able to get the balance of payments advantage, but they in turn received very easy terms when they borrowed the pesetas for economic development projects--for example for very large irrigation projects. There's one classic example near the town of Badajoz, near the Portuguese border and another large series of projects along the Ebro River--probably the most famous river in Spain that flows across the northern part of the country --and there were many anti-erosion projects. Driving through Spain, one will see mountainsides terraced in anti-erosion projects which have become very valuable for conserving the moisture of the soil and vegetation; and even more attractive than that by far and equally beneficial,

have been the vast reforestation projects in the arid hillsides of the country. There were just any number of different kinds of projects to help agriculture and to help industry, and these were things that I tried to show an interest in which reminded people that we had some participation in their coming about in the first place, and also showed an interest as something that was having a constructive, beneficial effect in the country.

I tried to pick out the most fundamental elements of Spanish governmental action that were helping large numbers of people, such as in the field of agriculture and the field of housing and the field of health and the field of education.

Now there was a reverse, a negative political advantage in our relations with Spain in doing this. And this is that the United States government has a rather unusual aspect in its relationship with that particular government in that there are many people in the United States, particularly American liberals--I mean liberals who are affiliated with the Democratic Party that was in charge of the administration back home when I was there--who have distaste for the type of government that exists in Spain. Now the United States Ambassador is presumably representing all elements and interests in his country. He is primarily representing the President of the United States and the Secretary of State who is the President's right-hand man in the conduct of foreign affairs. But beyond that he tries to represent the spirit of his own country. And it seemed to me in these circumstances that if I were able to underscore by a lot of personal actions attention to things that were obviously of benefit to large numbers of individuals, that this would not only put the United States in the light of taking an interest in that sort of thing; but it would underscore that

this is what we're interested in all over the world, and it would encourage the Spanish government to take more of an interest in these things; they already were taking a great interest. And would at the same time avoid any emphasis in our relationship which would indicate an approval for the type of thing that some Americans don't approve.

M: This is interesting. If you don't mind, we're rambling around a little bit here. This is common to your experience also in Latin America. Is this in your opinion, this activity you've just described in connection with your services in Spain, pretty well the best or perhaps only solution to the dilemma that seems to exist where on the one hand we seem by recognition to sponsor unrepresentative governments which many Americans object to, but on the other hand if we take any concrete activity to undermine those governments or to bring about in some way a replacement, then we're guilty of the kind of intervention which very often the same Americans object to? Is your solution to that dilemma pretty well what you described here? Is that about the best we can do?

W: Yes, I think so, and I think that the question of the degree and enthusiastic approval of individuals in a foreign government must be very carefully regulated and thought out insofar as one can maintain a degree of spontaneity or naturalness and still plan how he's going to comport himself. This will vary in detail for every government that we have relationships with and it requires a great deal--I think really there is no substitute for experience in this. But at the same time it requires more than experience; it requires a concrete awareness of what you're doing and of course this can be told--<u>could</u> be told--to people who were going abroad. It is <u>not</u> told to them; I mean one of the regrettable aspects of our conduct of foreign relations is that not only do we occasionally have people who have had no experience in this

field, but they are not even given good instructions as to what they are supposed to do and how they should comport themselves.

M: Why is that?

W: Unfortunately, because anybody high enough ranking to be able to do this is so preoccupied with immediate problems that he would just never think of doing this. They do give men briefings, of course; and he gets a very thorough briefing on details, and more than details on policies, and so forth, from the man immediately handling the relations of the country, but he's never likely to be high enough in authority to--in a sense--lay down a fairly clearcut set of instructions, even if those guidelines have been thought out with respect to that particular country. Perhaps it's expecting too much again in our system to be able to do this, because we don't have enough people in authority who have had that much experience, except for now the Secretary of State himself, who has had a great deal of experience but who is so terribly busy with the most critical problems before the country that he couldn't possibly take the time to do this or give it the thought that is required.

M: So it's sort of an insoluble administrative problem; it can't be solved?

W: Well, it seems to me again a dilemma in a situation where such a large proportion of the high-ranking officers in the Department of State come in, fresh and intelligent and capable though they may be, they are relatively inexperienced in the handling of foreign relations. The people below them apparently have never presumed to put the words in their mouths that would enable them to give this kind of briefing. I think that one good way to try to do this would be to have a person of great experience, who had had a lot of service as an Ambassador abroad, as a Permanent Under Secretary but not necessarily the only Under Secretary. I mean have one in addition

to the man who is selected politically.

Now we have today, we have two politically appointed Under Secretaries, and we have two Deputy Under Secretaries, who are really Assistant Secretaries with that title--one of them in administration and the other one, the highest-ranking Deputy Under Secretary, in this case Chip Bohlen.

M: Deputy Under Secretary for Political Affairs, right?

W: That's right.

M: Now, you mentioned the man for administration. One of the recent criticisms of the State Department is on personnel policy, which is really what we're talking about now, has been the fact that many of the operations' men, the fieldmen, the foreign service officers, have come to believe that the administration men have taken over the function of assigning foreign service officers to the field, sometimes without too much knowledge or appreciation of what's required in those posts. Is that the case? Has the administrative side versus the operations side in the State Department become an issue of importance?

W: I think it's an issue of importance, but by no means is it the most important issue. I think there has been a disproportionate weight put on the judgment of officers whose experiences have been entirely administrative, and who therefore tend not to have as keen a feel for that understanding and needs for other qualifications in the assignment of officers short of the position of Ambassador.

Now I'm not sure whether the present system results in the Deputy Under Secretary of Administration being the top officer to assign Deputy Chiefs of Mission. In other words, foreign service officers are number two officers in embassies abroad. These are, of course, very important positions in many places, in fact in most places. And I think it would be a mistake

to have the final judgment of most assignments rest in the hands of somebody who had had nothing but administrative experience.

M: So you're recommending then a Permanent Under Secretary who's really a foreign service type himself and has come up through the ranks in something of a career similar to yours, or he has held various posts himself, and can thus appreciate the necessities of those places?

W: I think that's true, yes. I think that is the kind of qualifications that are needed in that type of job, and I think that there are quite a few people who have had more experience in specific personnel or administrative functions than I have, who also have had the kind of experience that I've had and would be qualified to be sort of a Permanent Under Secretary.

M: Now you did help negotiate the renewal of the treaty agreement [with Spain]. Did there remain a quid pro quo of aid there, like you've been talking about?

W: My participation in the renewal of the base rights in the fall of 1963 was not strictly speaking in the field of negotiations, because the negotiations were handled almost entirely in the United States between the Spanish Embassy and the State Department, the State Department and the Defense Department, or vice versa. And the part that the embassy played and that I played personally in this was to try to help create a climate which would be the most propitious for the renewal of the base agreements. I think that we did have quite an important part in bringing about a mutually satisfactory result. The final negotiations, in fact virtually all of the negotiations, were completed rather hurriedly within ten days before the deadline of the end of the first ten-year period. The actual signature of a joint declaration which prolonged the base rights took place in New York at the U.N. because the Spanish Foreign Minister and

Secretary Rusk both happened to be there. It was a very convenient place. The renewal didn't take place either in Washington or in Madrid, and they had various advisers with them and came to a rather simple understanding that the agreements would continue as is, and that we would give [them] a certain amount of assistance in equipping the Spanish army for the next five years.

The basic agreement provided for an automatic renewal of the first ten-year agreement for a period of five years, and then again for a subsequent period of five years, provided neither party to the agreement wanted to renegotiate. Well, the Spanish, before the 1963 renewal, had indicated that they wanted to renegotiate but they had not given us a formal notification to that effect, so there was a possibility right up to the last minute that the agreement could go on without interruption, since that was the stated provision in it. And that is in effect what was done but with a joint announcement of the decision to do this and a few statements about our friendly relationship and cooperation.

M: This was in 1963?

W: 1963.

M: Has that been renewed in 1968?

W: No, the situation is now different. Early in 1968 when the last five-year extension of the original agreement was about to come due, the Spanish gave the United States formal notification that they wished to renegotiate; and therefore there has been quite a lot of negotiation up until the actual date of September 26 of this year, which was the date on which the final five years would begin.

The foreign minister was over here with several capable advisers, and they asked for a rather large amount of assistance of the same nature,

military equipment for the Spanish army--the Spanish Armed Forces--and it was quite a lot more than had been asked during the preceding five years. And no agreement was reached. It's now up in the air.

M: Currently we're operating as before but without formal agreement?

W: But they had notified us that they wanted to renegotiate, and therefore they invoked on the 26th of September the clause in the agreement which says that if agreement is not reached, then there is a further six-month period during which the two countries may come to agreement if they wish; and if they do not, then at the end of that six-month period, the United States has a year to remove its installations, particularly the installations that are removable.

M: So we're in that six-month period now?

W: We're in that six-month period now. That began on the 26th of September so it will go on until the 26th of March.

M: Of course in November of 1963 while you were still in Spain the assassination occurred here, and we had a change of administrations. Did the policy of the United States government insofar as you were concerned in Spain change between the Kennedy Administration and the first year-and-a-half of the Johnson Administration, while you were still in that post?

W: Not at all. There was no change whatever. The only time that I had an opportunity to see President Johnson, as I said in a letter I wrote [to the Oral History Project], was just two weeks after the assassination and after he had taken office, in which he was in a very solemn frame of mind. There was no real opportunity to talk with him, because he was trying out a system of greeting visiting U.S. Ambassadors in groups; and of course group interviews are rather unsatisfactory at best, and in this case he made a few comments to us as though he were making a very intimate speech

and talked about the heavy responsibilities that he was facing; and then we were photographed with him and that was all there was to it.

One of our number, who professed to know him better, as we were going out the door turned back and had a personal interview with him. That was Douglas MacArthur, who is now our Ambassador to Austria.

M: But there wasn't any major policy break?

W: No, none whatever. It was absolutely identical, and I always assumed that I was carrying out the spirit that I thought was the spirit of the United States government under the administration of a government of the Democratic Party. I continued to comport myself in exactly the same way and would have gone on that way for longer except that the President wanted to give the job to the Chief of Protocol who had been here--

M: Angier Biddle Duke?

W: Yes.

M: And then Duke replaced you in 1965?

W: Yes. I left the 1st of February 1965.

M: Well, then would you bring your career on up to date since then?

W: Well, then I was offered another embassy, was offered the opportunity to go back to one where I had been before that I mentioned to you earlier. Just through personal inclination I decided that I would really rather--if necessary, I would rather retire at that point than go back and start repeating my efforts in a place where I had had the good fortune to have accomplished something and had worked intensively and in a sense sort of used up my enthusiasm for that particular place. The attitude of mine that I express here is something that I think is a kind of disease of the foreign service in the sense that knowing that your assignment is of limited nature, maybe three years, maybe four years, you put so much of

of yourself into it--but you put it in knowing that it's a sprint in that particular place. And in a sense, if you carry out your mission according to the plans you make and try to solve the problems that exist at that time and then a period of years elapses after you've finished this, you feel that your mission had good fortune. It was a kind of a work of art, as it were, and if you're going back, you're tempting fate; and it just seems so unsatisfactory in various ways that it's very difficult for me to describe, that I thought that I didn't want to start in over again in a place where I had spent three intensive years, four or five years before that.

And also there were some other considerations. One was that I already knew that one of my closest friends, who had been my right-hand man at that post, was just about to be given that post; but they frantically were looking for some place to make a place for me because even the Secretary of State was slightly embarrassed by the fact that I had to leave Spain so hurriedly to make way for a replacement. And so he wanted to be personally helpful and considerate. And this was the only post that was open. And I knew that my very close friend and helper of a few years before was just about to be made Ambassador at that post.

So I came home, and I urged the Secretary of State to go ahead with the appointment of the other man. I said that he was a superbly qualified man, and he not only had had a lot of experience there, but he was working on the affairs of that country at the time in Washington. And he had had some thirty years of experience in the foreign service and a vast amount of experience, spoke Spanish very well, and was a very, very amiable man who seemed particularly qualified to have relations with the kind of people that the Uruguayans are.

Then I also knew that he had been concerned for years with a heart condition that was the aftermath of childhood rheumatic fever, and that he might not have very many years left and this was the culmination of his career. Well, I guessed altogether too well, because he not only did an absolutely superb job as Ambassador to Uruguay--this man's name was Henry Hoyt--but he--

M: Was his father a Henry Hoyt who was formerly in the State Department?

W: No, his father was a minister of the gospel. I'm not sure but I think he was a Methodist minister.

M: There was a Henry L. Hoyt who was Counsellor with the State Department before World War I, and I thought perhaps I had found a descendant here.

W: No, I don't think he had any relationship with Hank--Hank Hoyt. But Hank, last December, at a picnic of the American Uruguayan Society--of course, December is the middle of the summer there--I mean it's June in the Southern Hemisphere, rather overenthusiastically decided he would pitch an inning or two at a baseball game; and he suddenly fell ill and went over and sat under a tree and died of a heart attack.

M: I see you predicted well unfortunately in both of your instances there.

W: I am sure that his memory will stay with the Uruguayans for a long, long time.

M: Now you did accept a job, I believe, as special adviser on Panamanian Affairs for a short while after you came back?

W: Yes, then for two years off and on, I was an adviser to the negotiators of new draft treaties with Panama for a revision of the administration of the present canal, and for the continuation of the military base arrangements we have in Panama, or in the Canal Zone, and also a third agreement which would give us an option to build a sea level canal.

M: That's an important episode; actually I believe that is President Johnson's first foreign crisis--the Panama revolt in early 1964. Did he continue to take a personal interest in those negotiations while you were the adviser to the negotiators, or not?

W: Well, I think he did. Of course, the chief negotiator had all the relationships with the President on this subject that I knew anything about, except for those that went through first McGeorge Bundy and then Walt Rostow, when we occasionally went over to discuss main points with them. The President had selected as the principal negotiator Robert Anderson, who was a very close personal friend of his from Texas, who had been Secretary of the Treasury in the Eisenhower Administration, and Under Secretary of Defense, and I believe Secretary of the Navy at one point.

M: He has held a lot of different posts and has acted as trouble shooter for Johnson several times, I know.

W: Yes. And I always enjoyed my association with Mr. Anderson. He chose as his principal negotiator a man who had several advantages, a man of rather remarkable abilities which he tends to hide under a very modest exterior, John Irwin, John N. Irwin II. And John Irwin is a lawyer with the firm of Patterson, Belknap, and Webb in New York.

But during the last few years of the Eisenhower Administration, he was first Deputy Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, and then Assistant Secretary for a year or two for International Security Affairs, which is the principal specialized international relations job in the Secretary of Defense shop. He had shown an ability apparently in that job and had maintained very fine working relationships with high-ranking officers in our services.

M: And that was of course important in the Panama negotiations?

W: Yes, and as you know, the Panama Canal Company which is a wholly-owned corporation of the United States has as the single stockholder's representative, the Secretary of the Army. He is the single stockholder's representative. And the Governor of the Panama Canal Zone is usually an appointee from the Engineer Corps, the Army Engineer Corps. And of course the commanding general, who was commander of the Caribbean area, is an officer almost always from the armed services, one service or another, usually the Army. In fact I think he is always an Army officer.

So that the whole organization in the Panama Canal Zone, both the military forces or the Canal Zone government and the operation of the Panama Canal, are all very important functions that work through the Defense Department. Therefore, in order to work out any kind of arrangements for a new operation of the canal and for separate handling of the base arrangements--it would be something separate now from the canal operation and separately provided for in an international agreement--and then to try to undertake to make the necessary provisions which include engineering considerations as well as administrative and political and economic considerations for the building of a new canal which we had decided was feasible; it's very important that everything be worked out in close coordination with the people in the Department of Defense, as well as in the canal company itself, and in other parts of the government. So Jack Irwin not only had the advantage of having experience of relations with high-ranking military personnel, people in the various branches of defense, but he also is a Republican. Now this means that during the Johnson Administration, he was able to assist Anderson, who had been a Republican, but was a Republican for Johnson, as you may remember. He made a very clearcut public statement which was widely published.

This gave them special non-partisan qualifications to approach the Congress of the United States. Here they were, basically Republicans, negotiating treaties for a Democratic administration. And I was their only State Department adviser. No--there was another man who was mostly a drafting officer and a very skillful one who is named Edwin Smith, and he's now retired and living in Hot Springs, Arkansas. Unfortunately, he's quite ill now, but Arkansas was his home. Anyhow, these negotiations were very long drawnout and resulted in three draft treaties, which the negotiators had brought to about as much refinement as they were capable of doing. Then they were referred to the two governments and basically the U.S. government was waiting to hear the reaction from the Panamanian government, it being more preponderantly concerned with this since the canal is a very large part of their economy and so forth, and the military operations and expenditures are a very large factor in their economy. They had to go through a rather elaborate procedure to see just whether they could ratify these if they signed them. Now they have a Foreign Affairs Council which includes a number of ex-foreign ministers and people who have made lifetime studies of their relationship with the canal, lawyers who are very capable on the whole; and they had to refer these drafts to this council, and also to the foreign affairs committee of their legislature, which they did. This process took so long that they began to get into a discussion of their presidential elections and they had quite a turmoil over the selection of candidates; it was a time when the President seemed to be on the verge of impeachment because of differences of opinion on the selection of candidates for the presidency to succeed him. And so it was impossible for them to come up with a coherent and well-supported viewpoint on the details of these treaties. They said they had some fifty details that they had already

decided that they wanted to discuss and make changes; and they said that few of them were of any great significance, only one or two might require some real negotiation. In the meantime although the treaties had actually never been given to the public, they were of course not only given in this final draft form that the negotiators left them in to the various key committees and members of Congress and the Senate in particular, but those key figures of the Senate and the House had been consulted repeatedly and informed about what was going on. They were pretty thoroughly informed about everything that had been done in the negotiation, and their views had been taken into consideration as much as possible by the negotiators. While the U.S. government was waiting for a reaction from Panama, there were rumors of a lot of disapproval, particularly in the House of Representatives. Now the House of Representatives doesn't have to ratify treaties, but it has long had a great deal to do with the operation of the Panama Canal.

M: Because of the appropriations?

W: Appropriations, and there is a Panama Canal Subcommittee of the House Committee on Interstate Commerce and Fisheries. And this subcommittee devotes itself entirely to matters pertaining to the Panama Canal. There is no corresponding Panama Canal committee in the Senate at all. And the property that has been installed in the Panama Canal, the actual canal itself, the locks and all that, is United States government property, even though the land is the residual sovereignty of Panama of which we have the use in perpetuity as though we were sovereign--a very unusual situation.

M: And a very thin line, I would think too.

W: But nevertheless all the installations, I think, are clearly considered to be U.S. government property. So that when a new treaty on the operation

of the canal provides for changes which would change the nature of the sovereignty over the installations, this of course is something that is of great interest to the committee of the House.

M: That's right.

W: As well as to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

M: And that's where the opposition arose, in the House?

W: Yes. And we understood that there were, I say we--I then had nothing further to do with it except that I naturally followed it with interest. I heard from those who were in touch with the people in Congress that there were literally dozens of Congressmen who were prepared to oppose, to recommend to the Senate that they not ratify these treaties. This creates of course quite a dilemma with respect to the future of these drafts. And I don't know what a new administration expects to do about them; and my function throughout this was as adviser and my advice was used rather selectively, as it were. I mean, there are certain aspects of these treaties which I had rather grave questions about myself; but nevertheless I think that they represent some excellent work on the part of the negotiators.

M: Well, then you ended your career as Director of the Water for Peace Program, is that correct?

W: Yes, after I had been working as an adviser on this job for about a year, I was tempted to go to work for a private interest and had just been offered another embassy abroad, which was a perfectly interesting and important job, and I decided I didn't want to go to that assignment. Therefore, I felt that since I couldn't continue to be a foreign service officer upholding the standards and practices that I had always been led to believe were those that were proper for someone in the foreign service; if I just turned down assignments that were offered to me--and I had had

a very clearcut offer through the kindness of the Secretary of State and the Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs who was then Lincoln Gordon to an important country. It happened to be a country where I had been thirty years before as a vice-consul, and where I had been very deeply impressed by certain aspects of the country that I found extremely depressing. And I just for personal reasons didn't want to go there. I considered this to be contrary to the normal spirit which animates a good foreign service officer, and I decided I'd have to resign. And I also had an opportunity, which I had some misgivings about in private industry, so I resigned. I think it was the 30th of May of 1966, I guess. And then faced with the next step which was taking the job that I had been tempted by, I decided that I couldn't take the job either because it meant going back to Spain and dealing on a business basis with the officers of the Spanish government with whom I had had a relationship only because I was there and was an official. And thinking that over more carefully, I decided that profitable though it might turn out to be that I'd feel better about it in the long-run if I didn't do that. And I felt that way particularly because when I mentioned to the Secretary of State himself that I was planning on doing this, he said, "Well, now let's see. You've been away from there for seventeen months. The British usually consider, don't they, that you should be away from the post two years?" And that was enough for me. I was going to go to work about three days from then, and I called up the man who had offered me this job [and declined].

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By Robert F. Woodward

to the

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