

Fowler Hamilton Oral History Interview – JFK, 08/18/1964
Administrative Information

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Biographical Note

(1911-1984) Hamilton was a lawyer, government official, and Administrator for the Agency for International Development (1961-62). In this interview, he discusses the development of the Agency for International Development, the Alliance for Progress, and problems related to funding foreign aid programs, among other issues.

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Oral History Interview

with

FOWLER HAMILTON

August 18, 1964
New York, New York

By Edwin R. Bayley

For the John F. Kennedy Library

BAYLEY: Mr. Hamilton, I think we should begin with an account of the circumstances under which you were appointed Administrator for the Agency for International Development.

HAMILTON: Well, I saw them only from my perspective. Briefly they were these. In the late spring or early summer of 1961, Senator Stuart Symington, who is a friend of mine, asked me to see him and when I did, he said that the President [John F. Kennedy] was interested in considering who he would appoint to head the CIA the following fall since Mr. Allen Dulles [Allen W. Dulles] had already said that he intended to retire at that time. Senator Symington also said that he had suggested that the President consider me and the President had said that he did not want to consider anyone unless each person to be considered would undertake in advance, that if he were offered the position, he would after several days consideration take it. I said I would undertake the position if offered it. That led to a telephone call from Attorney General, Mr. Robert Kennedy [Robert F. Kennedy], which in turn led to a morning meeting with him and General Maxwell Taylor [Maxwell D. Taylor] in the former's office in which they discussed very generally with me my views on intelligence, my experience in the intelligence field and related matters. That was followed by a brief meeting on the same day with the President at his office in which the President further examined the matter with me. Then the President arranged for me to go after lunch, which he arranged for me to have down in the lunch dining

room at the White House—the Navy Mess there, and hereafter go over and see Mr. Allen Dulles with whom I was acquainted. I had quite a long talk with Mr. Dulles

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about the CIA organization and he gave me as much information about it as he felt was appropriate. Then nothing happened until September when I saw the Attorney General at the occasion of the meeting of the Judicial Conference of the Second Circuit at the White Face Inn, on Lake Placid, and I said that I had gotten reports from newspapermen to the effect that there had been some activity in connection with the selection of the head of CIA and the wholly erroneous report that I had been offered the position and refused it. I had not been offered it; I had not refused it. I thought it wise to take up with the Attorney General and the President the possibility that stories of that kind might appear for it seemed to me these stories would depreciate somewhat the importance of the assignment. The Attorney General asked me if McGeorge Bundy had been in touch with me and I said no. He said that he would get in touch with him and that McGeorge Bundy or he would get in touch with me later in the week.

This occurred on Saturday. The following Tuesday I got a call from the Attorney General asking me to come to Washington to see the President. I went to Washington and met the Attorney General first as we had arranged. He said the the President had decided that he wanted to get someone with more immediate intelligence background than I had to head CIA whenever Mr. Dulles did resign. I said that I thought that was a wise judgment on the President's part and started to leave. Whereupon the Attorney General said that there was another matter he wished to talk to me about. He said that he and the President's other advisers had gone very extensively into my background and that the President wished to consider me for the position of Administrator of the Agency for International Development. I said that I was much more interested in that than the CIA post and inquired as to how much time I would have to consider it.

The Attorney General said that the President wished to talk to me about it later that afternoon at about 4:30-5:00 P.M. I went away

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to consider it. I talked with my wife, consulted with some friends and read the statute establishing the new Agency for International Development which was the International Development Act of 1961. I returned to the Attorney General's office, told him that I would be glad to accept the position and he arranged for me to go to the White House to meet Mr. Ralph Dungan [Ralph A. Dungan]. Mr. Dungan took me to the elevator that carried me upstairs to the President's living room in the White House. The first time I had seen him in connection with the CIA early in the summer he had been in his Oval office. On this occasion he was upstairs at the White House for he was getting ready to host a dinner for the President of Peru. I recall that he showed me the piece of antique silver the President of Peru brought as a gift. He asked me if I would undertake this assignment and I said that I would.

BAYLEY: Do you recall the exact date of that—do you have any records that show that date? It might be important in connection with something else—somebody else.

HAMILTON: It was the last week of September. There was some concern on the part of the administration that the man to administer AID should be selected and announced before the end of the week because the AID Appropriation Act had not yet passed the House and it was anticipated, wrongly as it turned out, that Congress was going to adjourn at the end of that week.

[INTERRUPTION]

BAYLEY: You were just relating the circumstances of the discussion with the President that afternoon.

HAMILTON: That is correct.

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BAYLEY: In the upper room—did that complete it?

HAMILTON: Yes. That is completed.

BAYLEY: The, why don't you go on from there as to what took place next.

HAMILTON: Well after that, my appointment was announced the next day and my name was sent up to the Senate. The next day I returned to New York; came down again to Washington the latter part of the week, I believe it was Thursday or Friday, to appear at a hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. I was introduced to them by a member of the Committee, Senator Stuart Symington, and Senator Dodd [Thomas J. Dodd], who was the Senator of Connecticut where I then lived, also sent word into the Chairman that he approved the appointment. There was a brief hearing and I was asked some questions, I believe by Senator Morse [Wayne L. Morse] and Senator Aiken [George D. Aiken], having to do with my attitude towards state-owned enterprises. I told them my only attitude was that the Administrator of foreign aid should administer it in the interest of the United States and that I had no doctrinal attachment one way or the other as between private or public ownership of utilities in foreign countries. I withdrew from the hearings and I went over that afternoon and had a chat with Mr. Henry Labouisse [Henry R. Labouisse] who had been acting as head of the International Cooperation Administration which was the main predecessor of the Agency for International Development.

BAYLEY: All right, before we go into any history of which you are actually concerned with, I think your principal problem at the beginning was an administrative one, that was somewhat of a tangle.

HAMILTON: That's right. It was somewhat of a tangle. Do you want me to go into the reasons?

BAYLEY: Go ahead.

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HAMILTON: Well, briefly, the situation from the standpoint of organization and personnel I found to be this: Early in his administration in pursuance of certain statements he had made during the campaign, the President ordered a searching re-examination of all of the foreign aid programs and of the agencies that administered them. There were several agencies at that time administering the program the ICA [International Communication Association] was administering the Point 4 Program. It was also administering a certain amount of the economic side of the military assistance program, and certain other funds—contingency funds. The Development Loan Fund which had been set up in 1958 under President Eisenhower [Dwight D. Eisenhower] was making long-term easy-term loans to the less developed countries to enable them to build so-called infra-structure projects and generally to maintain rates of imports which their current foreign exchange positions could not sustain. The Export-Import Bank was handling all of the local currency that had been generated by sales of PL 480 goods for local currency. The Department of Agriculture had been handling the PL 480 surplus food and fiber program pretty much alone. A decision was made by President Kennedy to put all of these functions and organization except PL 480 and the Peace Corps. together and that was provided for in the International Development Act of 1961, which created a single agency, the head of which was to report to the President and the Secretary of State. That was the Agency of International Development and my job, of course, was to be the administrator of that.

BAYLEY: There was one other feature in the legislation which provided quite a fight in that 1961 Session, relating to long-term borrowing authority and so on.

HAMILTON: Yes, although I, do not know too much about that because it was before my time. The net result of this was that Congress agreed to authorize appropriations of development loan funds five years forward but not

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to permit money to be obtained from the Treasury without further appropriations.

BAYLEY: That legislation also contained a provision—a rather unusual provision—about keeping those employees who are necessary.

HAMILTON: That is right, it did. The authorizing legislation provided that within 60 days after its enactment—on September 4th—i.e., by November 4th, the merger of the pre-existing agencies into AID had to be carried out. But the

language to which you refer provided that only those facilities in terms of money, furniture, contracts and, most importantly, the people, could be brought over into the new agency, which the Administrator personally found to be necessary to the conduct of the affairs of the new agency, AID.

BAYLEY: What date were you sworn in...

HAMILTON: I had two swearing-ins. I had a civil ceremony, so to speak, on September 29th when I took the oath of office and then largely for public purposes the President thought well of my suggestion that I have a swearing in at the White House at which Justice Whittaker [Charles Evans Whittaker] who is an old friend and colleague of mine would swear me in—he swore me in on October 4th. I went to work really on September 29th.

BAYLEY: Then that really gave you just a little over a month to carry on this other program?

HAMILTON: That's right, only one day over a month in which to decide what to do in the way of transferring from the old agencies to the new one the 6,500 civil service employees out of a total of 17,500 employed by the predecessor agencies.

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BAYLEY: How did you go about that?

HAMILTON: Well, at first I thought I could delegate it and thus escape the problem of dealing with it myself directly since I was trying to get this new agency organized. But I became convinced afterwards after looking at the statute that I was going to have to do it. The procedure that was developed briefly was this. On the advice of our personnel people I authorized a directive to the effect that the personnel files of each of the 6,500 people be reviewed and that any of them who had been rated as low as "unsatisfactory" at any time during the previous three years be subjected to scrutiny. That was done and produced only 855 which meant that all but 855 of 6,500 people had been rated better than merely satisfactory consistently during the three previous years. This in itself is remarkable in view of the charges of inefficiency and incompetency that had been leveled at the agency's personnel. Those files—those 855 files—were then reviewed by a personnel board which was set up. Its members were all people interested in and active in personnel work from outside the agency. The head of it was a retired Rear Admiral who had been Chief of Navy Personnel and also Chief of the Norfolk ship building yard during the course of his career—Admiral Hildring. They reviewed the 855 files and they selected approximately 350 of these which they thought on the basis of the files were people who were not necessary to the new agency. Mind you, this all had to be done within this period of a month and a day which you mentioned. I then decided that I had to review these and did review each of them individually. I did this mainly on weekends and at nights because I was

busy during all of this period being briefed by people in the various segments of the predecessor agencies. I made the review and I selected from this group of 350 I think something like 250 that I found were not necessary to AID.

BAYLEY: You were somewhat more lenient than the Board.

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HAMILTON: I was more lenient. You have very difficult problems because you have difficult situations. I remember one in particular, say Miss X who had been in the agency for more than 20 years. She presented some temperamental problems; she had a disastrous personal situation at home; she was really unemployable as far as any other company or institution was concerned because she was up in her years, 45-50 years old, bright, difficult. Now what do you do? It wasn't really her fault she was kept there. So you had some very difficult and vexing problems and some of those cases which I frankly regarded as hardship cases, I concluded the government should continue to support them.

BAYLEY: What about the organization of your new staff?

HAMILTON: The form of the new organization had been determined by a study that had been made by a committee headed by Mr. George Gant of the Ford Foundation. That was not in the statute, but the Congress had been shown this form of organization and the legislation had been obtained in effect on the representation that that would be the form of the organization that was put into effect. I decided that we were going to follow that form of organization, without any change for at least six months. And I did that for the reason that I didn't think that I knew enough to change it. Further, the people who had decided it were careful, responsible people. I, of course, had to meet heavy pressure from various groups who were interested in changing the organization because every particular interest, without exception, wanted a special assistant attached to my office, the Office of the Administrator. I remember meeting one night a committee of scientists chaired by Det Bronk [Detlev W. Bronk] of the Rockefeller Institute in which he, Max Milliken, Carroll Wilson, and a number of other scientific people urged that I have a scientific adviser. And similarly, I had discussions with George Meany and he urged a special labor representative.

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I finally did that. He [Mr. Meany] is a man with a good deal of vigor and force. That was one case where I finally buckled. But, on most of the others, I withstood the pressure and we just stayed with that organization which contemplated in AID four regional offices with as much power delegated to them as possible. And God knows they needed it. And then various staff and supporting offices.

BAYLEY: One of your most vexing problems or most important problems was the selection of the administrative officers under you.

HAMILTON: You mean the Deputy Administrator?

BAYLEY: Yes.

HAMILTON: Yes.

BAYLEY: Would you describe that Deputy situation?

HAMILTON: Well, that was an interesting point. When I had talked to the President, I had said to him "Who picks the people?" And he said, "You pick the people. But, of course, I can veto anybody you would nominate and I would give you the right to refuse my suggestions." He made it quite clear that he wouldn't impress upon me any appointment. He also made it perfectly clear that I was not to pay any regard to anyone who tried to put any political pressure on, because I remember him saying in substance that not only from the standpoint of what is the sensible and the right thing to do, but from the standpoint of good politics, the best thing to do was to try to get that agency working in as good a shape as we could. He said, "I don't want you to be bothered by political pressure." This was later confirmed at a session I had with Larry O'Brien [Lawrence F. O'Brien]. My notion originally was to pick a deputy to do mainly the inside administration since the President also had said to me that he hoped that I could soon get AID organized to the point where I could spend a good deal of time up on the Hill and out in the country trying to explain why foreign aid programs are in our national self-interest.

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My original notion was to get a deputy drawn from business and from the Republican Party since I was a Democrat. It was perfectly obvious from a brief look at the legislative history of our appropriations that unless you have bi-partisan support, you wouldn't get the money. The President had already appointed before I was selected a committee under the chairmanship of Mr. Thomas Watson of IBM to help in the recruitment of businessmen for Mission Directors abroad. Through Mr. Dungan's good offices, I got in touch with Mr. Watson, had several breakfasts with him and he said he would be delighted to help in trying to find someone who could be the inside deputy. As a result of his efforts and subsequent meetings, we finally decided to offer the position to Mr. Walter Lingle, Jr. of Procter & Gamble, who had been in charge for some years of their very large international operations.

I had the idea which I still think makes good administrative sense, that if you're organizing a new enterprise, you pick the top people and let them pick the people below them and the latter in turn pick the people below them and so on down the line to the end. This was in a sense a new enterprise. I had hoped that I could get a deputy first and then he and I together would select the people down below. That didn't prove to be possible because it took Mr. Lingle a good deal of time to make up his mind. At one point he said he couldn't do

it and I talked to Charlie Meyers at Sears, Roebuck and asked him to help out. He said he couldn't do it. So then I went back to Mr. Lingle and he agreed to do it. But in the meantime, I had to go ahead and get other people. So we got Mr. William Gaud to run the Near East and South Asia region. He had been in the Far East during World War II. Secretary Rusk [Dean Rusk], who knew him, indicated to me that he felt that Gaud was available. I first met Gaud when I had been in Kunming, China. He had been out there running Lend Lease. And then I saw him again here in New York where he and I are contemporaries and we were also neighbors in Connecticut. I talked to

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him and he said he would be willing to undertake the task in the Near East and South Asia. I offered him at that time the job of being Deputy because this was at a time when Lingle thought he was not available. Gaud said that he would much rather have his own operation, particularly as I had said that he'd have a high degree of decentralized responsibility because I was convinced then, as I am still convinced, that the only way to do anything that big is to have a high degree of decentralization—you pick your people, support them, if they're no good fire them, but until then give them a lot of latitude. The second person we got hold of I believe was Ed Hutchinson [Edmund C. Hutchinson], who had been at the Development Loan Fund and later at RCA. We got him to run Africa. Mr. Dungan suggested him. Then we had a very difficult time in getting anyone to run the Alliance for Progress because, as you will recall Ed, there had been a great deal of difficulty in getting anybody to be Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs. Just judging from the gossip in the papers, the thing was pretty confused. The President was very much interested in it.

BAYLEY: Well, he was running that out of the White House!

HAMILTON: He was running it pretty much out of the White House. There was Arthur Schlesinger and there was Adolph Berle and various other people all interested in Latin America. According to reports, he tried to get more than twenty people to be the Assistant Secretary for Latin America. And one could understand why the President was interested—both on the merits and for great public interest that was attached to the Alliance for Progress. As I soon found out—under ICA Latin America had been the dumping ground for many incompetents because there hadn't been any money going down. There had not been too much activity down there. The great efforts had gone first to

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Europe and in the Marshall Plan and then the Far East to contain communism and Africa had some glamour, but nobody paid much attention to Latin America. AID inherited twenty-one Mission Directors in Latin America. This was after the Alliance for Progress had been going for almost nine months. Over half of those people were former County Extension Agents and USDA people. They were the salt of the earth, but they had just been handling small Point 4 Programs and here they were called upon to put through these reforms, to handle vast loans,

and to negotiate with these very sophisticated Latins. These people were being thrown burdens far beyond the whole range of their experiences.

One day we were talking and the President talked about the possibility of Tom Killefer who was then Vice Chairman of the Export-Import Bank and I had known Tom who had been in Oxford before my time. We thought well of him, but I was a little doubtful as to whether he had the needed intimate knowledge of Latin America, especially since I felt my own lack of it. So at another conference with the President, Dick Goodwin [Richard N. Goodwin] suggested the idea of Ted Moscoso [Teodoro Moscoso] of whom I had heard only very generally. The President was attracted to the idea and I said I would check in on it so I got in touch with Abe Fortas who had been counsel for Puerto Rico and knew Moscoso well. I also spoke with George Woods of First Boston Company who had known Moscoso very well. Both of those men are extremely able men. I knew Abe extremely well and Mr. Woods had been very helpful to me, especially in light of the fact that originally he had been selected to be the Administrator. They both said Mr. Moscoso was an ideal person. So I reported that to the President and said I thought that was fine. So we got Moscoso.

Seymour Janow had been a man who worked for me many years ago at the Board of Economic Warfare and whom I had also known

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when I was out in India and China with the Air Force. He was there working with the Foreign Economic Administration and I saw him up in Kunming. I had seen him from time to time since and our office in Washington had done a little legal work for him. He had an engineering firm active all over the Orient buying and testing ores and also doing contract work for ICA and also for the DOD. So I called up Ed Reischauer [Edwin O. Reischauer], our Ambassador in Japan, to check on Janow. I told Reischauer I was thinking of Janow this was before I approached Janow—to undertake the assignment of running the Far Eastern side of AID and asked what he thought about it. Well, aside from the fact that he was a little irritated, substantially because I got him out of bed at six o'clock, he said “Sy Janow knows more about the Far East than any American. He certainly knows more about it than I do, but then I'm prejudiced because I was married in his house. And we go shooting together and we're very great personal friends.” So on that basis, I approached Janow—it takes a heck of a long time to get people pried out of jobs you know. If you have a fellow who is making several hundred thousand dollars a year—Lingle was making \$350,000 according to Procter & Gamble's proxy statement—it takes some time to get them extricated. I talked to Janow and he naturally had to think it over because he was doing extremely well in the Orient and he had a very favorable tax situation because he was a non-resident of the United States, but finally he decided that he would be willing to go ahead. Then I had offered Vince Barnett [Vincent Barnett] the position of the man in charge of programming which subsequently Hollis Chenery [Hollis B. Chenery] took on.

BAYLEY: One of the omissions here—you acquired Frank Coffin as a Deputy...

HAMILTON: That's an interesting story. Frank's a very nice fellow. This takes me back to a remark of President Kennedy—characteristic of his good humor and good sense wrapped up in one bundle—after he said that I would have all

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this latitude in personnel, he smiled that very attractive smile of his and said, "But there is one further thing, Mr. Hamilton—don't make any friends over in that agency until you have a chance to appraise the people because you may not want to keep them." And then he grinned and said, "Despite that, there's one young fellow over there who has been a very good friend of ours (or words to that effect) and I think he's a very able fellow," and I asked who that was and he said, "Frank Coffin."

When I got to AID and met Coffin, I appraised him and told him I wanted to look around for two or three weeks. Then I had a chat with him and he said he wanted to be the First Deputy and I said that I wasn't going to make him a First Deputy, that he was a good, able fellow, that if he wanted to be the Second Deputy and have report to him not the Operating people, but the General Counsel, Public Relations, and Legislative Liason, etc. I'm not sure about Administration—and the Programming, why that would be all right, but that I had two partners who were as competent as he was and were in the same class in Harvard and I didn't think they were good enough to be First Deputy in AID and I didn't think he was either. Not from the standpoint of anything he had—qualities of competence or character—but just from the standpoint of seasoning and experience and furthermore, he'd been a Democratic Congressman and I knew we were going to have to go up on the Hill to get money and when I turned to my principal assistant, I wanted somebody that would be acceptable to the Midwestern Republicans and the Southern Democrats. I thought that had to be a Republican businessman, because, of course, as you know, the Southerners get most of their money from the Republicans when they run for office even though they run on the Democratic ticket.

BAYLEY: Well, Mr. Lingle was a Republican, wasn't he?

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HAMILTON: He was a Republican—he was an Ohio Republican. As a matter of fact, he was a converted Republican, and Santayana says it's the converts that make the fanatics—because his father had been a Democrat.

BAYLEY: Well, the reason I mentioned Frank Coffin was that led to the—or was related to the—one of the principal innovations, that was that Program Coordination stand under Hollis Chenery.

HAMILTON: Yes. That's right.

BAYLEY: ...Which was a new thing for the agency...

HAMILTON: Yes. That's right. I called up Ed Mason [Edward S. Mason], who is an economist at Harvard for whom I have great respect, who is an old friend of mine, and I said I want the best economist in the United States. Well, he said there are two. Vince Barnett and Hollis Chenery, and I called Vince and he wasn't able to take it. And, so, then I called Hollis and he did take it. Meantime, in November when I went up to see my son play in a soccer game in Pomfret, Connecticut, I went up to Cambridge and talked to Frank Keppel [Francis Keppel], who was Dean of the Harvard Education School, and offered him the job of being Assistant Administrator in charge of Social Resources. He was very keen on it, and was going to do it. About two weeks later he called up and said he was awful sorry, but Harvard wouldn't release him. The same day I got a call from a Boston lawyer named Mr. Charles Coolidge who was apparently the senior one of the five members of the corporation—apart from the President of the College and the Treasurer. He was very nice and courteous, but said that they just had had too many people go down to Washington and they couldn't spare Keppel. So then I tried to get Millicent McIntosh [Millicent C. McIntosh] who had formerly been head of, I believe, Barnard. She was just retired—she was very

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enthusiastic but said her husband was medical practice in New York and she couldn't do it. Then we finally got Leona Baumgartner. I'd been thinking of her first for Chief Public Health Officer. She'd first been recommended to me by an advisory committee of doctors under the chairmanship of Howard Rusk, which also had the Dean of Johns Hopkins Medical School and the President of the American Association of Medical Schools. They had recommended Leona Baumgartner and by this time we had gotten along until spring. We didn't have anybody in the Social Resources spot. I was very anxious to get someone—I wanted to get somebody with a liberal cast to balance the business impression that I had been first trying to create.

My judgment of the political posture of foreign aid was that unless we gave an appearance of being conservative and businesslike, tough and hard-headed, we were never going to get anything but a complete shellacking when we went up on the Hill next year for funds. I had in mind a two-year program for getting the money. The first year you could get it on faith in what we were trying to do, the next year we would have a tough fight which I was preparing to win—that meant licking Otto Passman. But I had criticism from George Meany and others—very candid criticism that the agency was too conservative. I explained to them exactly what I was doing. That usually mollified them. But I wanted to get somebody on board who was well known, liberal, and I felt that I had to do it quick because by spring criticism was mounting—Leona Baumgartner was liberal. She has served in New York City as head of Public health and she was a woman—Jerry Weisner [Jerome B. Weisner], who was a good friend of hers, with whom I talked, gave her a great send-off, saying that she was attractive and articulate—so we selected her....

BAYLEY: One loose...

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HAMILTON: ...and never regretted it.

BAYLEY: One loose end there was—you introduced the subject to Mr. Lingle—he didn't stay very long.

HAMILTON: No, Walter Lingle and I found a very interesting thing. That temperamentally we were so different that it just became increasingly difficult for us to get anything to mesh. I think that we could have probably run AID my way, indeed I'm confident we could have run it better my way, but Walter would no doubt disagree. He was confident that it could be run his way, and I think it certainly could have been run his way better than by compromise. I think the one thing we have in common was our mutual appraisal of each other. I came to the conclusion that he was a very good business man. He came to the conclusion, I think, that I was a pretty good lawyer. We each came to the conclusion that we couldn't work together and make the thing work so we had a talk just along those lines and made a final decision—I said, well, since I'm the fellow that's here, I guess that you'll have to leave, and he said, "I agree," and we're still friends and our wives are friends. It didn't work out—just one of those things.

BAYLEY: While we're still talking about general things, what was your relationship with President Kennedy through this? I mean, were you personally intimate? Were you...

HAMILTON: No, we weren't.

BAYLEY: Social friends?

HAMILTON: No, we never were. You see, the President had not known me. He knew about me. When the administration, as you know Ed, came to power they did the most thorough job of research on everyone whom they might even

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want to consider, and my name had been put in, during the early days, on the list for Attorney General before Mr. Kennedy—Robert Kennedy—decided he would take it. They were considering other people and I heard from the grapevine that my name was considered and they were asking a lot of information about me. So that when I dealt with him, from the early days on, it was on a very friendly basis. He was always extremely cordial. I know that I was astonished the other day in talking to Harlan Cleveland to find that Harlan had only been invited to the White House for dinner or lunch once, and that was two weeks ago.. He's been down there for three years. I suppose Mrs. Hamilton and I were at the White House for lunch or dinner during the fifteen months I was down there for at least every two months, and I was there for lunch in addition, once a month. I never had any problem getting access to the President or getting my point of view across. My own conception of my job was perhaps drawn from the law. As I saw it, my job was to cause him as little trouble as possible, try to

get the thing organized and try to hold it together. I was literally concerned that it was going to fall apart. And I knew that I didn't know much about it and I assumed that he knew what he wanted it to do, that he didn't have time to mess around with the internals of the thing, so that I never went over to see him except whenever he asked to see me.

BAYLEY: I recall that you used to refer to him with some tongue in cheek perhaps as "the client."

HAMILTON: Whoa...not so much tongue in cheek. I was working for him.

BAYLEY: That was a real...

HAMILTON: A professional relationship...

BAYLEY: Your own views...

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HAMILTON: That's right. And I never courted the President because I didn't have the time and did not suppose he wanted it. He was very nice, attractive person, but I knew from where I sat in my job, which was much smaller than his, that I was so busy, that I didn't want anybody coming to see me unless it was absolutely necessary for me to make some kind of decision, and since the programs had been pretty well laid down, there wasn't much you could do about them the first year except try to see that they were carried out. It's months or years in most cases from program to action. My whole task as I envisioned it for the first year was just trying to get the thing pulled together. I didn't think we could change anything.

BAYLEY: How did you deal with the White House generally? What were your channels of communication?

HAMILTON: My channels were always through Ralph Dungan. I had no dealings at all with McGeorge Bundy except on occasions, for example, when he would be charged by the President with coordinating efforts on such a thing as boycotting Cuba, then he'd call a meeting and I'd go over and everybody would go over from the various agencies and that would be a collective arrangement. Occassionally, Carl Kaysen, a very bright fellow in my estimation whom I asked to come over and work in the early days, of McGeorge Bundy's staff, would call up about something or other, but almost always it was Ralph Dungan who was the contact with the White House and he'd be the fellow that I'd clear appointments with, clear people with, etc.

BAYLEY: Now, you said earlier that your conception and the President's of your task was primarily congressional and public opinion.

HAMILTON: Well, no. My conception of my task was to try to get this thing

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melded into some kind of a viable entity, to use the cant phrase, as quickly as I could—to get people in who could take these regions over because they were operators, then try to support them, give them the responsibility for getting their assistants. Several of them, for example, kept assistants whom I thought they shouldn't keep. It turned out subsequently that I was wrong. They knew better than I did. Whether they did or didn't, unless it was just clear, I never asked them really to get rid of anybody or vetoed anybody they wanted. I think I went too far in some respects in that regard. Nevertheless, that was the fact. I wanted to get it going, get it operating, so that I could then lay the basis for the work on the Hill and outside.

BAYLEY: I guess that's about what I meant in my question...

HAMILTON: Yes...

BAYLEY: Was that your personal opinion?

HAMILTON: Yes, that was my conception of it, and also because I felt that was where my talents lay. That I could get people and persuade them to come to work, but then they'd have to do that work. I would concentrate on the outside and my First Deputy on the inside. I had a relation like that before and I think this probably colored my thinking—years before, when I'd run a much smaller agency in the Board of Economic Warfare and Max Way, who is now one of the editors of *Fortune*, *Life*, and *Time*, was up there. Max did the inside job. Well, he and I just meshed like gears. We were different in temperament, but we were very compatible. I did the outside job, Max did the inside job and the procedure worked extremely well. One of the problems, of course, was that it just didn't work out that way between Walter Lingle and me. Had I, for example, just on the basis of hindsight, persuaded Bill Gaud to take the First Deputy's job, I think it would have been better.

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BAYLEY: How did you go about the job of persuading Congress...

HAMILTON: Well, the first thing that I did, I knew some people on the Hill because of some work I'd done up there in 1956 for a subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee in the Senate. I knew really nobody in the House except Carl Albert [Carl B. Albert], who'd been in the same class that Dean Rusk and I had been in at Oxford, and on or two others. So I invited over to my house for a series of suppers the regional subcommittees—each one to a different small dinner—of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. I wrote a letter to each of them explaining who I was inviting, what the purpose of it was, that the dinner would be over promptly at 10:00 and that all members on both sides of the aisle were being asked. So we had about five or six of those

dinner and at each of those dinners I would have whoever it was in AID that was in charge of the region of the subcommittee in question and also the Assistant Secretary of State, if I could get him, or his Deputy if I couldn't, for that area. And then I also asked over the subcommittee on appropriations—the so-called Passman Committee—of course, Otto Passman was the Chairman—and we just sat around and had dinner and had a general talk.

BAYLEY: Do you feel those were effective?

HAMILTON: Oh, I think that was the most effective thing I ever did down there as to the Hill, because these people were always friendly and courteous on a friendly basis. I never had any personal trouble on the Hill that I was aware of. They may not have agreed with me, of course.

I remember the first Authorization Act. We went in for four billion, nine hundred million—we got four billion five from the House and finally ended up with an authorization of four billion three hundred million. The two members who signed the dissenting report each called me up after

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they had signed to say that they did not want this to discourage me. A lady from Evanston, Mrs. Church [Marguerite Stitt Church], and Omar Burlison from Texas, another, Mr. Fountain [Lawrence H. Fountain] from North Carolina stayed away rather than vote against us.

BAYLEY: What about the coordination of your efforts with those of the White House? Larry O'Brien.

HAMILTON: Well, that was—well as far as Larry O'Brien was concerned, it was superb. I couldn't ask for any better relationship than with Larry. What happened briefly on that was this. We went in for the Authorization Act in the House and the Senate. We went in for 4.9 billion and we came out with 4 billion five authorization for fiscal '62. But there had been a good deal of flapping around about it because as the Act finally came out, there was some question about aid to Yugoslavia which was really a tempest in a teapot because we weren't giving any significant aid to Yugoslavia. Ambassador Kennan [George F. Kennan] got very exercised because the criticisms of Yugoslavia were, of course, complicating his job. Also there were some restrictions that Senator Symington—my old friend—insisted on in aid to India.

BAYLEY: That was that limitation of the amount of funds...

HAMILTON: The Symington limitation was that the next year you couldn't spend more than you did the previous year—a ceiling on the amount. It turned out we didn't have enough money the next year to reach the ceiling. But I think as a consequence of this problem—and this is just conjecture on my part—the White House felt that when it came to the appropriations, they should handle it and that word was conveyed to

me, I think through Frank Coffin or Fred Dutton [Frederick G. Dutton], I'm not sure which. So I said fine. The sound point made was that political power was obviously at the White House and an appointee from Connecticut didn't have it—so I said fine. So the chaps over at the White House—Henry Wilson [Henry Hall Wilson, Jr.] and Dick Donahue [Richard K. Donahue]—were the ones I think

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who were most active on it—spent a good deal of time working on the various members of the Passman Committee in various ways and other members of the Congress. About 24 or 48 hours before the final vote, it appeared that those efforts hadn't been quite as fruitful as had been hoped and so I got a request—I don't know who it came from—to address a letter to each member of Congress urging him to repel the Passman Committee's report. This was, I guess, after the report had come out.

BAYLEY: You mean the recommendations of the Appropriation Committee?

HAMILTON: Yes, that's right. What happened was that the thing rather fell apart and Passman cut it to 3.8 billion—from four billion five authorized. Three thousand eight hundred and fifty million—that's what it was, and then there was a desire to have a fight in the House at that point. I explored the thing on my own and came to the conclusion that it was utterly hopeless, and this was the conclusion of the House leadership with whom I talked. So I then said that it didn't seem to me to make any sense for me to exhaust whatever small credit I had by writing a letter to a lot of people, that it would only hurt AID more to fight and lose. We'd just have another issue that would be lost and it would hurt whatever standing I might have in the ensuing year. So I said that was the case, unless the President personally asked me to do it, I didn't choose to do it. He did not ask me to do it and I didn't. Then we went up to the Senate on the appropriations side. The House had cut six million dollars from the administrative funds, that is those for say, salaries, travel, etc. That was catastrophic. Had that gone through, I would have had to discharge twelve or thirteen hundred of the top people. I went over to the Senate and talked with a number of my friends over there. They agreed if necessary to put a special bill through to get these 6 million funds appropriated. We also had an interesting situation on the Senate Foreign Appropriations Committee. I sat down with Senator Saltonstall [Leverett Saltonstall] and we worked out—he agreed

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that as far as the Republicans were concerned, that if the Democrats would go along that the Republicans would go along with an appropriation of 4,450 billion, almost the full amount. The House had approved 3,850, the Senate 4.45 billion—the difference would be split and we would get 4,050 billion. The authorization had been 4.5 so that the Senate was going to kick off 250 million which helped them when they went back home. Then I remember Senator Saltonstall saying that Passman will have to agree to split the difference. That would give us 4,050 so that we break the four billion dollars ceiling which was what I said I wanted

to do. I wanted to get more than four billion dollars.

BAYLEY: That would have been a sort of moral victory.

HAMILTON: Yes, for Passman had said he was going to cut us well below four billion. He wanted it below so we worked this out and, of course...

BAYLEY: It didn't have any real meaning?

HAMILTON: Yes, it had an important symbolic meaning. The press would have said Passman had been defeated and that, of course, was important in context, especially from the standpoint of the following year. To have bloodied his nose on this would have been quite important. So we finally, with a lot of work, got that thing worked out. By this time, on the Senate side, I was back running things. Then they went to conference and we did a good deal of work to persuade the Democratic Senators who were opposed to it, Senator Ellender [Allen J. Ellender] and Senator Robertson [A. Willis Robertson], I think Senator Byrd [Robert C. Byrd] and Senator Ellender—senior senators five men in all from the South, to waive their right to be conferees. John Salter, our legislative liaison, got two proxies on appropriations—the crucial vote on the amount of the Senate—from Senator Magnuson [Warren G. Magnuson], and one other. This was decisive because every vote on the appropriation in the

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Appropriation Committee of the Senate on every issue was five to four. So we squeaked through in the Appropriation Committee with our 4.250 and got it down to the Senate floor where it went through because we had the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on our side, naturally since they had approved four billion five. So then they went to conference and they had been in conference for a long time and the Senators stood fast. Finally, Otto Passman said after they had been gone for about an hour, he said, "We don't have to split the difference because I have a deal with the White House that I only have to go up but 300 million." The Senators didn't believe it. They called and found out that was the case. I didn't know anything about that. I also learned later that Passman had cleared with the White House cutting the six million dollars out of our administrative funds by talking to, I think it was Dick Donahue...

BAYLEY: Dick Donahue...

HAMILTON: ...who in all innocence traded that to Passman for some funds for the Alliance for Progress without really realizing that the consequences would have been catastrophic as far as running AID. So we finally came out with out 3.950 I think for the next year.

BAYLEY: Now, I think we ought to go through some of the big international issues that were involved during your administration. Then I want to come back to some more general matters.

HAMILTON: Fine.

BAYLEY: This may not have been a big one. I think it has some importance. One of the first things I encountered when I joined your staff was the issue of British Guiana . What happened there?

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HAMILTON: Before I arrived at AID, Cheddi Jagan [Cheddi B. Jagan] had been invited to the United States. Before I took office, Dr. Fitzgerald had told me there was an AID team already in British Guiana negotiating with them. Dr. Fitzgerald came up to my hotel—I was staying at the Fairfax—one Sunday. He had just received this cable reporting that Jagan wanted twenty million dollars before he came to the United States. I said I knew nothing about it and asked his recommendation. He said that the State Department apparently wanted to make some sort of commitment. We then got together with Bill Burdett [William A.M. Burdett] who was then Assistant to the Deputy for the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, which included British Guiana as a part of the British Empire. Burdett was very sensible and cautious. He said, “Well, let’s don’t say yes and don’t say no” (an attitude I found subsequently was apparently characteristic of a good diplomat) “but just let him come on.” And I was inclined to think let’s say yes or say no. Bill said no and I went along with him, as I was very mindful of newness in the job. Jagan arrived and came around to see me and various people. He wanted 250 million dollars for the development of his country, which of course was absurd. So I told him that I didn’t know very much about his country, but that seemed to me to be a good deal of money. He came to see me on three different occasions and each time his asking figure fell. Finally, he got to around ten or fifteen million and finally he said he just had to have something to show for his trip. I said that it didn’t seem to me to make sense. If he needed 250 million, then obviously five or ten million was getting you nothing. He was quite irritated about that. And subsequently I sent down a study group.

BAYLEY: Some aid eventually did go down there, didn’t it?

HAMILTON: No, the only thing that ever went down there when I was there were study groups and one purpose of the study groups was to put some CIA people down there. I had gotten in tough with the CIA about this. We sent some

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technical assistance programs people and one of them was from CIA people.

BAYLEY: That was what I was thinking about.

HAMILTON: That's right, there were several people up on the Hill who were violent against Jagan, and I indicated to them one of the reasons we were doing this was because of security aspects of getting some CIA people down there and that cooled off their opposition .

BAYLEY: In what way did the issue of Cuba come into your field?

HAMILTON: It didn't come in at all because the Bay of Pigs was in April and I wasn't sworn in until September. The only way it came in was in October 1962 when the missiles problem began. There was a meeting over at the White House that McGeorge Bundy called, in which the question was that of boycotting all ships that traded with Cuba. Since half of AID tonnage was U.S. flag and half of it was foreign flag, AID generated an immense amount of tonnage in the United States since we were spending over five billion dollars a year, including PL-480, and since 80% of it was shipped from the United States. We controlled a lot of tonnage, so we set up a black list—a black list showing the shipping lines that dealt with Cuba.

BAYLEY: That's right. The only connection with Cuba that I can recall directly. Vietnam was one of the biggest problems, wasn't it?

HAMILTON: That's right.

BAYLEY: I guess you—I remember that you did your first and really your only extensive overseas trip in the Far East.

HAMILTON: That is right. Before I was asked by the President to undertake this assignment—he had already sent Max Taylor and Walt Rostow [Walt Whitman Rostow] on a

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mission to Vietnam.

BAYLEY: They had already both returned.

HAMILTON: They had perhaps returned before I was appointed. They made a report. One of the early meetings I attended was a meeting in the Secretary of State's conference room on a Saturday morning attended by Max Taylor, Walt Rostow, Bob McNamara [Robert S. McNamara] Ros Gilpatric [Roswell L. Gilpatric], and George Ball. Dean Rusk was in for awhile and somebody from the CIA. Whether it was Allen Dulles or Bob Amory [Robert Amory], I don't remember. When this meeting was called and I learned its purpose, I checked in our Agency to find somebody who knew anything about Vietnam. I found a chap and talked to him for several hours the day before. He had been in Vietnam and then Laos. He was a very knowledgeable fellow.

BAYLEY: Stoneman [William H. Stoneman]?

HAMILTON: No. I don't remember his name. Maybe it was Stoneman. I asked him to come to the meeting with me. But when I arrived at Rusk's conference room, I was told that it was a meeting for principals only so my man was not allowed to attend. The substance of the report was that the situation was bad but Diem [Ngo Dinh Diem] was a vigorous fellow willing to fight and we should step up the support that we were giving to him.

BAYLEY: What was the nature of our aid at that time?

HAMILTON: You mean in terms of the amounts of money?

BAYLEY: Well, as to the economic and military...

HAMILTON: Well, up until that point, it was mainly military that had been giving. I remember when I later met Diem, he told me that when he

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wired President Eisenhower for aid in 1954, when everything was going down the drain, he thought it a miracle when President Eisenhower responded. He said that very sincerely. I'm sure he believed it was a miracle too. Diem did. But, it was mainly military up to October 1961. We had a very large aid mission out there, but they were doing mainly agricultural extension work. The new plan contemplated much larger amounts of aid. All I could say at this meeting was that if the President established a high priority on this program, we would see that they got the money and goods. There was another meeting at the White House about two or three weeks later. It was in the upstairs living room of the White House with the President and the same group. The President decided on a hurry-up program. Thus, we diverted two shiploads of rice that were on their way to Calcutta and shoved them into Vietnam. My staff started stepping up the recruitment program for it was very difficult to get people to go out and train the Vietnamese how to fight guerrillas. We don't have much experience. In between those two meetings I recall now there was another meeting of the Security Council on Vietnam and so I attended it. We got a briefing by Allen Dulles and Bob Amory on the enemy positions and strengths about which they didn't know too much.

BAYLEY: Let's turn to the Alliance for Progress which was in many ways the most vexing part of your whole administration.

HAMILTON: Yes.

BAYLEY: People expected a great deal from the program!

HAMILTON: Yes, they did.

BAYLEY: And it was generally thought that somehow the Alliance had not really succeeded. And, of course, it hadn't from the most ambitious goals. Why don't you describe it?

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HAMILTON: Well, let me describe my understanding. It was just a phrase—a set of words, of course—when I first undertook this assignment.

[-Pause-]

BAYLEY: Before we paused, we were just beginning on the Alliance for Progress.

HAMILTON: Yes.

BAYLEY: And you were giving a little background of it.

HAMILTON: When I started reading the papers on the Alliance for Progress, the picture that emerged was somewhat as follows. The President had announced during his campaign that the United States was going to do more for Latin America and indeed had criticized the Eisenhower administration for its failure to do so. The Alliance for Progress stems historically from Operation Pan American which was the thing which Kubitschek [Juscelino Kubitschek] sponsored. The Act of Bogota—as you recall back in July of 1960, perhaps in anticipation of the forthcoming political campaign, President Eisenhower's administration had sought authority for half a billion dollars of aid for Latin America. That was the immediate beginning of our renewed interest in Latin America. Then on March 13, 1961, President Kennedy made his speech on the Alliance which contained largely the ideas of Dick Goodwin. He referred to Dick Goodwin as a man, I think, who thought of the phrase "Alliance for Progress." And Dick, of course, had followed it very actively. When Secretary Dillon [C. Douglas Dillon] had gone down with Dick Goodwin and Walt Rostow and Jack Kaplan to Punta del Este in August of 1961, they found themselves in this posture. The President had made the speech announcing the Alliance on March 13, 1961. In April came the Bay of Pigs. In August came the Punta del Este meeting. Latin America

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was in a ferment. The Cubans were flushed with success. Brazil was hostile to our position and Mexico was hostile. The decision originally had been made not to mention any figures but to simply lay the basis for further figures of U.S. aid. Under pressure of events the impression was given that we were going to try to provide annually a billion dollars and try to help Latin America get a billion dollars from other outside sources if they, on the other hand, would raise eight billion dollars a year out of their own savings. It had been estimated, I think by Rostow, that a developing country needed 20% of its invested capital from outside and approximately 80% from inside. A marked difference that struck me immediately

between the Alliance and the Marshall Plan was that the Marshall Plan was announced on June 5, 1947 in Secretary of State Marshall's [George C. Marshall] speech at Harvard, but no money was appropriated until June of 1948 except for an emergency appropriation of 500 million dollars that was made (not as part of the Marshall Plan) in the fall of 1947 by an extraordinary session of the Congress that President Truman [Harry S. Truman] had called for two purposes: One—to make some food and fuel available to Europe which was then seething with Communism and chaos, and two—to try to keep on price control. He failed in the second one. So there was a year's preparation in the United States and abroad before anything was supposed to happen under the Marshall Plan. A different tactic was taken in the case of the Alliance, presumably—I've never known why—but presumably because of the pressure of the Cuban fiasco and the feeling that we had to do something much faster. One result of this was that people were very confused really about what the Alliance for Progress was. The Latin Americans took the view that it was a program under which the U.S. was going to give them aid and their view varied from some aid to total aid, depending on who you talked to. We took the view, on the other hand, that it was the cooperative enterprise in which we would help them to help themselves

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make some changes in their economic and social structures that—together with some increased savings—would generate business and foreign exchange and so raise their standard of living. The problem, of course, was to get U.S. citizens qualified to do our part and Latin Americans qualified to do theirs. This is the problem you run into almost everywhere in the world. We have never had an empire. The people in our country who were knowledgeable about Latin America would come out of one or more of the following categories, and this is true for almost every place in the less-developed world: (1) The State Department, (2) American business, primarily the extractive industries who were politically, to say the least, not too well received in these countries. No U.S. government agency could send an oil man for example to be head of a diplomatic mission in Brazil or in Venezuela. (3) To some extent, but a very small extent, transportation companies, airlines and steamship lines, and (4) traditionally charitable institutions, ecclesiastical and secular, missionaries, and the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations. One of the great problems—never solved—was who do you get in the United States with a knowledge of Latin America who is qualified to go into this new kind of diplomacy. I think the people in the Department of State are the best trained in any agency in the U.S. government. If you take the fact that DOD has three first rate universities turning out people every year that do nothing but work for them in the Armed Services, whom they can order anywhere in the world, the State Department people are remarkably well-trained and able. But the traditional diplomat—(a) he's supposed to know about the whole world, (b) he's shifted around every three years, (c) he's the kind of man who is trained to do three things: He's trained (1) to get and analyze the facts, (2) to formulate policy, and (3) to negotiate. From the standpoint of going in and trying to see how you get a steel mill built—how you get a railroad built—how you help the masses to help themselves—these are just outside of the scope of his traditional training

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and his traditional method of thought, his skill, and his profession. So that the main problems that the Alliance faced that was immediately apparent to any of us were, one, where do you get the people with the know-how, who it is politically possible to send to work on it, and two, there had not been time to undertake the kind of planning that you had in the case of Europe where the problem, of course was much simpler because you were trying to help a country recover, not to create, and it's much easier to repair or rebuild an old machine that's broken down than to go into a country and build a steel mill and develop the know-how to operate it. It's just as simple as that. And the expectations as in so many large affairs were so far ahead of the possible, that the gap became increasingly apparent as time went on. You can't build a highway in New York in less than two years, and you're lucky if you build one in the Andes in eight. It would be years before anything tangible of a specific nature is accomplished.

BAYLEY: Were there any—with specific instances or more important negotiations or programs—that spring to mind?

HAMILTON: Well, in connection with the Alliance for Progress, I decided that we would not make funds available unless there was compliance with the terms of the Alliance, because I felt that while we would get an awful lot of heat for not doing anything, that would not kill it. The thing that would just kill it BINGO—would be to have a series of spectacular messes in about eighteen months. For example, in fiscal 1962, for Argentina—the proportionate share of our Alliance money was about \$80,000,000. We disbursed a million and a half. I will give you first one illustration of the kind of project that I stopped when Frondizi [Arturo Frondizi] was President, and his administration was somewhat shaky. We got a lot of urging from various quarters to approve a \$40,000,000 development loan immediately for the Argentine. When this loan reached my desk, I found it to be a \$40,000,000 loan in dollars to

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provide \$19,000,000 of local currency costs and \$21,000,000 of imported equipment to extend the runways and improved hangars on four international jet airways. This made no sense at all in terms of Argentina's need. They had a sick railroad situation. The deficit on their railroad was almost equal to the deficit of their budget. Everybody that I could talk to whose judgment seemed to make sense said that if you clean up this railroad mess, you would do more than anything else to help the development of Argentina. Instead of their coming up with some kind of project, for example, dieselize their railroads, or reorganize their railroads, they came up with this piece of nonsense and after about two sessions of interrogation it finally developed that President Frondizi felt that the Air Force would be pleased if they got this airport project. Well, I think if we'd let that money go out on many such projects, it would have killed the Alliance, or at least maimed it.

In 1961 and 1962 the situation in Brazil was hopeless. They would come up and make a lot of promises and do nothing. Roberto Campos, who was their Ambassador, was a very nice fellow. He would come over and insist that we disburse money. As a matter of fact, we

didn't disburse in 1962 or commit in 1962 any money to Brazil out of the 1962 appropriations. Out of the 1961 appropriations, \$100,000,000 had been committed by Secretary Dillon when he'd gone down and done the billion dollar plus rollover in order to try and save Quadros.

BAYLEY: That was mostly for the northeast, wasn't it?

HAMILTON: That's right. Part of it was also balance of payments money, but they had a previous commitment. We had to do it. It was to be \$34,000,000 up in the northeast. The basic problems of U.S. participation in the Alliance is well illustrated by this situation. Yes. I think the episode involving the

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Draper Committee illustrates the problems that the U.S. faces with respect to the Alliance for Progress and also with respect to all of the less-developed countries—the problem of trying to help them help themselves to become free, independent, stable countries. The President in 1962 adopted what seemed to me to be the very sensible course of organizing groups to go down to various countries and make a study of every agency that had a mission there. In that regard he appointed General Draper—William Draper [William H. Draper, Jr.]—who had great experience in foreign aid, Marshall Plan, and so forth, as Chairman of the group for Brazil which contained representatives of the State Department, the Army, the CIA, the OWI, and AID, and I think the FBI, each of the American agencies operating in Brazil. We sent a very good AID man, Jack Oley, a very experienced fellow. They went down to Brazil and made a study and then went back to Panama to do a report. General Draper then reported to the Counterinsurgency Committee of which General Maxwell Taylor was Chairman. This was a committee which the President had set up to keep under constant review Communist subversive activities aimed at chaos or establishing Communism. In the course of his report, for example, General Draper mentioned that he'd been up in the northeastern part of Brazil. He said he'd travelled pretty well all over the world and this was the worst place in the world that he'd ever seen for a human being to try to live. The people were ignorant, illiterate, underfed, and suffering from all sorts of disease—notably venereal diseases and malaria. After describing the awful living conditions in this terrible region, he turned to me and said, “Your people are not doing a very good job because last April (1962) (he was reporting in October) they agreed under the Alliance that they would provide 40 people to go down and work with SUDENE (which is an acronym of a government agency which was set up to administer a joint program under which we were putting up, as I recall, \$30,000,000 or thereabouts and of which the Brazilians were putting up about 33 or 34 million) because of the 40 people we had undertaken to get in these

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various fields of sanitation, education, training doctors, training dressers, helping farmers to develop more improved methods of agriculture, transportation, water, and so forth, we'd only been able to provide only 19 people over a period of April to October. I was tempted to

say him, but didn't, but it illustrates a point—that I'd bet him a thousand dollars that in a year's time he couldn't find a personnel man for Ted Moscoso, who could find 40 people who'd live under the circumstances that he'd talked about, who'd get a salary about equivalent to that of a fellow driving a beer truck in New York or Washington, who would take their wives and families and go down there and live for three years in that place, and a personnel man who at the same time could find people who could go to Central America to help them set up a free-trade area, who could find the railroad experts to solve the Argentine railroad problems and persuade them to change their railroad policy, who could help the Chilean Indians set up a school lunch program, education, etc., etc., etc. The people are just not available in the United States. For example, we lost some of our very best people to foundations where they'd put them to work for much higher salaries studying what was wrong with foreign aid. I think, as you know, that the limiting factor on our international power is our capacity to attract and hold able people.

BAYLEY: You have the language problem.

HAMILTON: Of course.

BAYLEY: What's your judgment on how it did operate in its first year? Was there some progress?

HAMILTON: I think that it operated worse in the first year in the perspective of ten years, which was the time allotted because of the things we tried to do, than it would have operated if we hadn't tried to do anything but spend a year

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getting organized like the Marshall Plan Program. Programs were underway. They could not be stopped. Our claims of a billion dollar U.S. contribution for the first year of the Alliance were somewhat inflated and that did not fool the Latin Americans. Naturally, Latin American politicians could not take blame for the lack of results. They'd say that we were sitting on our hands and it took too long to process projects. On the other hand, Congress had set up certain requirements that the Latin Americans couldn't meet—through no fault of their own—they just didn't have the engineers and the accountants to prepare the studies on the projects.

BAYLEY: One of the goals of the Alliance, of course, which you mentioned, was the matter of reforms, and government financial reforms. There was also the problem—the related problem of takeovers by armed forces.

HAMILTON: Yes, that is right.

BAYLEY: Did some of those take place in your time at AID?

HAMILTON: Yes, we had the problem in Argentina of recognizing the Argentine government, you know, after they took over. Then there was a problem in Guatemala when we withheld our recognition from the government for some time.

BAYLEY: I guess it was a little later—the couple of the more, better publicized—really more....problematical like the Dominican Republic and...

HAMILTON: No, the Dominican Republic occurred first...

BAYLEY: Honduras.

HAMILTON: That was right, yes. In Santo Domingo the Trujillo [Rafael Leonidas Trujillo] regime was overthrown.

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BAYLEY: There wasn't any question of not aiding Santo Domingo?

HAMILTON: Oh no, we were organized and went down to the Dominican Republic very quick.

BAYLEY: Bosch.

HAMILTON: Juan Bosch proved to be a better talker than a doer of things and had some problems and he was ultimately displaced. One of the problems that you have as, you illustrated in the case of the Dominican Republic, is that the countries get competitive and try to play you off one against the other. Ultimately you come pretty much to either granting aid in terms of development or not and allocating pretty much on terms of populations. It's about the only rational standard you've got. You're not going to say, well we're not going to give you anything of consequence. You have to say, as we did to Sukarno [Achmed Sukarno] and to Goulart [João Goulart], you are not even trying to be sensible so we will furnish no money but we will help your people in the fields of education and health. Education because it's in our interest to get the, thinking like we do, health because we are all on the same planet. We're rich and they're poor. But, then from the standpoint of economic development, it is of course just folly to try giving them money or to put money into a country with a fellow like Sukarno in charge, or Goulart, and we didn't.

BAYLEY: Turning to another area, and one of the big issues of aid, as far as Congress was concerned, was the Indian situation.

HAMILTON: That is right. The background of that as you will recall, Ed, is briefly this. Krishna Menon, whom I never met, was regarded with a great deal of distaste by a number of the members of Congress, and Nehru [Jawaharlal Nehru] was not very highly regarded because it was felt from the standpoint of American

interests that he was a wishy-washy socialist. Ironically enough, the Communists

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objected to him on precisely the same grounds. There was a good deal of interest in the establishment of a steel mill in India. Ty Wood, the AID representative in India, was opposed to it. Ambassador Galbraith [John Kenneth Galbraith] was very keen on it because he felt it would represent to the Indians in a dramatic way the fact that we were willing to help them build something even though it was owned by their government. I had no confidence in my judgment, of course, to appraise the political consequences of building the mill. I was perfectly prepared to adopt Ambassador Galbraith's judgment on that, especially since he's an able fellow and has been a very old friend of mine. On the other hand, it seemed to me perfectly clear that there was no point in our building a steel mill unless we were confident that it would be well built and would be run. I had been disturbed by the reports that I had gotten that the government-owned steel mills that had been built by the Germans, by the Russians, and by the English were running at very considerably less than their full capacity, while the steel mills in the private sector were running at full capacity and more than their statistical full capacity. I had very much in mind the feeling on the Hill, and felt that it only made sense that, if we were going to try to achieve the development and political objectives that Ambassador Galbraith had in mind, we wanted to be very sure that the thing was going to be a success. It is one thing for the Ford Company to flop—to have a 250 million flop on an automobile like the Edsel—but the government cannot afford to fail. So Bill Gaud, who was in charge of the Near East—South Asia Region of AID—and I talked about it and finally decided the thing to do was to get an American company or group of them to go out and make a feasibility study. We did. Ty Wood had been very effective in talking to the Indians and they had gotten receptive to the idea that if the study group made a recommendation which our government adopted and Congress approved—that the money be forthcoming that U.S. Steel or a group of American steel companies would

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be permitted or invited to come in and run it for a running period of eight to ten years until there were Indians trained to do it, and also to have a right to buy some of the equity and that some of the equity would be sold to the public in India. I was very concerned that the proposed method of pricing the steel the government was going to use was going to be such that you couldn't tell whether or not the steel was being sold at a profit or not. You don't have to be a doctrinaire capitalist to realize that if you have a pricing structure in which you can't tell whether or not a state-owned enterprise is running at a profit or loss, you've completely lost any basis for controlling it. That will lead you right into the kind of a mess the Argentines are in with their railroads, as distinguished from the situation of the TWA where you have open books and accounts and they pay market prices and they charge market rates so you know where you are and where you are going. Of course, the TWA has a tax exemption, but nobody would be objecting to a tax exemption if they weren't making a profit that should be taxable. So they are making a profit. In that sense at least they don't distort your economic picture. So I made an arrangement with the U.S. Steel Corporation to go out

there and make this study. I left before the report came in. What I had in mind was that if the study were favorable and we could work a consortium, then the private American business people would go up on the Hill and say, "Look, we think this makes sense." In that way I thought we could sell the Congress on it and justify it.

BAYLEY: It never really got to that point, it never did?

HAMILTON: No, it never did. It got involved in a public controversy before the facts were in really.

BAYLEY: What about India in general? It...

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HAMILTON: Well, India in general is a terribly important...

BAYLEY: It certainly was one of our greatest efforts...

HAMILTON: It has been one of our greatest efforts, but after all, one-third of the people of the less-developed world live in it. India is forty countries, with populations as large as Argentina or Chile. Nobody will think anything about it. And if it were the size of British Guiana, it would be 800 countries, which is almost—because they've only got a half million people down there. Venezuela twelve million. There are thirty of them. Chile, Bolivia, those places, none of them over ten or fifteen million. They're not even 5%. So if you compare them to twenty Argentinias, the amount of money we spent there on a per capita basis, it hasn't been any greater than we spent in other places. Much less than we spent in places like...Nigeria, places like that. It just happens from the Far East standpoint it is just too big.

BAYLEY: All through your term there was this running argument about the balance of payments. There was great concern in the administration.

HAMILTON: There was. It was very serious. And especially of concern to the President. He got so concerned about it, I recall, that in the early summer of 1962 he appointed a business committee under the chairmanship of Roger Blough [Roger M. Blough] with whom he had some differences a few months before on prices of steel, and the other members of the business committee were Tom Watson [Thomas J. Watson], and David Rockefeller, and Harold Boeschstein, and the President of DuPont, Crawford Greenewalt, and Sproul [Allen Sproul], the man who had been head of the New York Federal Reserve Bank before Al Hayes [Alfred Hayes] took over. There was a government committee under the chairmanship of Secretary of Treasury Dillon in which Mr. McNamara sat with Charlie Hitch [Charles J. Hitch] as his adviser and I sat for IAD and George Ball sat for State and Luther Hodges [Luther H. Hodges] or Eddie Gudeman [Edward Gudeman] sat for Commerce. On occasion, Carl Kaysen sat in. AID had to prepare for the

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President, which we did under Hollis Chenery's general supervision, a budget of how much of the money we spent would not be tied to U.S. purchases. The President made up report report and clear in advance weekly—any situation that would involve more than a million dollars and report to him on a bi-monthly basis any situation that involved over 200 thousand dollars of untied aid. He took a great personal interest in it. He called me several times about it. He was very concerned about it and in the last session I had with him we talked about the problem. I told him that I agreed that it was a very serious and difficult problem. The measures that we took to tie aid to U.S. goods are by no means watertight. If you've got a country that has been importing ten million dollars worth of American goods and exporting eight million dollars worth of South American goods, and you make a loan to them for two million dollars and say that they have to buy two million dollars worth of U.S. goods and they had been buying eight million dollars of U.S. goods, what they do is simply use your two million to buy the eight million and spend two million somewhere else. So that it is kind of a cosmetic business. Furthermore, as I find since I've gone into private practice, the buy American program is pretty difficult to police. American contractors will get a contract and that qualifies buy-American and then they'll tend to get waivers from local AID people to use foreign subcontractors, because one of the problems we have in tying procurement to U.S. is that we've never operated businesses out in these former colonial areas. Thus, there is really no way that you can lend Senegal five million dollars and have them spend it in the United States. The money merely goes to France. They cannot use it as a political matter anywhere but in France. We don't have exporters who are interested in Senegal markets which have been locked up for years by the French.

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BAYLEY: Then the steps that were taken by AID to correct this in your opinion weren't really...

HAMILTON: Of great consequence...

BAYLEY: No.

HAMILTON: ...It was better to do it, it helped. Don't misunderstand me. And it was of some help, but it didn't get to the roots of the problem. As a matter of fact, the root of the problem is not government expenditure at all. For example, in 1963 we had a deficit in our balance of payments of two billion two million dollars. We had foreign aid, foreign expenditures of a billion dollars. We had the expenses for the Department of Defense outside the United States in dollars for camps and local services and oil, etc. of three billion dollars. Now, what would have happened if you stopped the foreign aid and stopped the foreign military expenses. You would have stopped that \$4 billion put abroad by the U.S. government (\$1 billion for foreign aid and \$3 billion for offshore expenses for U.S. military forces). Had that been done, the \$2.2 billion deficit in our balance of payments would not only have continued to exist, it would have been worsened because

foreign countries would have had \$4 billion less, i.e. \$3 billion of U.S. military expenditures and the \$1 billion of U.S. aid, to pay for the goods that they bought from the United States. In other words, even with this \$4 billion subsidy for U.S. exports, we didn't earn enough by \$2.2 billion to pay for our foreign investment, to pay for our imports and to pay the \$1.7 billion of foreign currencies that US. Tourists spend abroad. In short, to the extent that we have a surplus on private account in our foreign trade balance, that surplus was the result of a subsidy in the form of this \$4 billion foreign expenditures by the U.S. government. Let's look only at the European countries and Japan. They on balance have a deficit in their balance of payments with us. In other words, they don't get enough dollars from the goods that they sell

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us to pay for the goods that they buy from us. If they were deprived of the dollars that they earn from our military expenditures within their boundaries, plus the dollars they earn by sales to the less developed countries which are paid for by them with the dollars that we have put out there for aid, the European countries and Japan would have had either an immediate drain on their gold reserves or a sharp curtailment of imports from us which would have further worsened our balance of payments problem. So, it is a tough question.

BAYLEY: One effect, of course, was to make it more difficult in Congress as a result...

HAMILTON: Sure, that's right. All the drain on gold is laid to foreign aid and of course it isn't so. And the President, the last time I talked with him, was very concerned about it.

BAYLEY: Tell me about your resignation from AID.

HAMILTON: Well, I became convinced, Ed, that I couldn't spend another year down there. When the President asked me if I would take the assignment, I had made clear that it was temporary because it had been very sudden. And I had originally thought that I would be able to stay on for two years until the fall of 1963. But—I'd done that, ignorant really of the legislative process, without realizing at the time how important that part was of the whole thing, and of how important it was to anybody who was going to succeed me in the fall of 1963 to have gone through the mill of going up on the Hill and getting legislation in the spring of that year.

I felt at a considerable disadvantage in not having the experience that I would have liked to have to do the job well—in not having gone through the legislative process that produced the creation of the agency and been through the battles that got the money. So I

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decided that the thing for me to do was to talk along these lines to the President, which I did, and also told him that I thought I could be more effective helping the AID program really from the outside and urged that he give consideration to setting up a committee to educate the

people on what foreign aid is all about. I'd found so much ignorance. I urged him to select a successor. And we talked about various people and among the people that I mentioned was David Bell [David E. Bell]. I said he was a priceless asset to the President's administration. He accepted it and that was that.

BAYLEY: There's been questions asked from time to time, I think, that you would be in a good position to answer this or give an opinion on it, about President Kennedy's attitude towards foreign aid. He is on the record, of course, that he is supporting it as did other presidents.

HAMILTON: There were people who questioned the depth of his feeling about it, is that right?

BAYLEY: Right, that's right.

HAMILTON: Well, I think, my impression was that he cared about foreign aid profoundly. He was not as you know a man given to cheap displays of sentimentality or emotionalism. He was a thoughtful, detached person. But quite apart from his temperament, he realized that his political strength in Congress was very, very thin. He was only elected by a small majority as you know better than I.

BAYLEY: Very small...

HAMILTON: Very small minority...

BAYLEY: This was on his mind, I know.

HAMILTON: I would go up and talk to people on the Hill. One after another

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would say, "He's a fine man, and I'm for him, but he's no help to me because I ran ahead of him in my district. President Eisenhower would run ahead of me in my own district." So that under President Eisenhower, Congressman voting for foreign aid, whether they were Democrats or Republicans, could say to their voters, "Well, look, I don't know anything about this, but President Eisenhower says he needs it." Since President Eisenhower was more popular in their district than they were, his popularity, as they put it to me—would "absorb the blot." President Kennedy was not in that position. I think he probably had less political capital when he came into office than any president since Andrew Jackson and he, and Larry O'Brien, as you just said, were very painfully aware of it. I know one time—you were at that meeting—where somebody asked the President why he did not make more fireside chats, and he said, "I've asked Arthur Schlesinger to check the record and it showed that I have made more than President Roosevelt [Franklin Delano Roosevelt]." He said, "You can just go to people so often." I always had the feeling, although I never knew him well enough to talk to him about it, that what he was really pointing for

was his second term—when he could really get some political capital.

BAYLEY: I know that people were always criticizing him for not making a more emotional appeal...

HAMILTON: That was his temperament, but even more important was his realization that there were just limits to what he could do. He could, I think, for example, have never taken the course President Johnson [Lyndon B. Johnson] is taking. President Kennedy would have had to go in for five billion and let them tear out a billion and a half and end up with three point five billion. That's a painful process too, because the press says everyday, the President loses, the President loses, and none of us like to lose.

BAYLEY: Like it's sort of pictured like a contest there.

HAMILTON: Yes. Which is, of course, absurd. It's a Chinese play really.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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