

**Charles R. Burrows, Oral History Interview—9/4/1969**  
Administrative Information

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**Biographical Note**

Burrows, Ambassador to Honduras (1960-1965), discusses his relations with Honduran President Ramon Villeda Morales and with General Oswaldo Lopez Arellano, the man who overthrew Villeda Morales; Villeda Morales' 1962 visit to the U.S.; the Bay of Pigs invasion and Honduras' relations with Cuba; and General Lopez' 1963 coup d'état; among other issues.

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Charles R. Burrows  
Charles R. Burrows

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Charles R. Burrows

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Oral History Interview

with

Charles R. Burrows

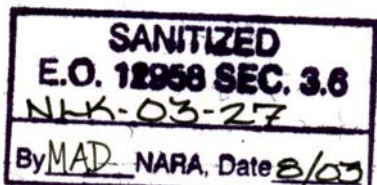
September 4, 1969  
Washington, D. C.

By Dennis J. O'Brien

For the John F. Kennedy Library

O'BRIEN: Well, I have a series of questions which I put together, and I'm sure you've got some things that you feel that should go in, so why don't we just start with perhaps the question or with your observations, on— what your thoughts were on the Latin American policy of the United States. Well, you were in Venezuela just prior to... Going to Honduras; what your feelings were about foreign policy in the late fifties.

BURROWS: Well, in the late fifties as far as Latin America particularly was concerned, we were just beginning to give some serious attention again to the area. President Eisenhower [Dwight D. Eisenhower] and his brother [Milton S. Eisenhower] were beginning to pay a lot of attention to it. Really, the beginnings of the Alliance for Progress were sown in the late fifties. Latin America was beginning to feel a little less ignored than it had for a long while after the Second World War.



I had felt, as I think most Foreign Service people, in Latin America at least, that Latin America is remembered very well during times when we realize that we need it (and have some interest), but then it is forgotten very quickly.

After the First World War, the Latin Americans were forgotten almost completely, until the Good Neighbor Policy got started in the thirties. During the Second World War they were looked upon, as they always are, as staunch allies, and they were. But then, shortly after the Second World War, again we began to forget them, I think, and to take them for granted. Certainly by the early fifties that was true. We were preoccupied in other areas of the world, first with recovery

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after the Second World War, and then with the Korean conflict. Quite incidentally, several of the Latin American countries were there with us contributing also to the United Nations' effort. But by the middle fifties, we seemed again to have forgotten Latin America.

But by the time I went to Honduras, I felt that we were demonstrating a lot of interest, and constructive interest, in Latin America. Our AID [Agency for International Development] program was getting well underway. We were encouraging integration in Central America for example, supporting the idea of the development of the Central American Common Market [Central American Multilateral Treaty for Free Trade and Economic Integration]. The people in Latin America were again beginning to think the United States was interested, and it looked like a period when we could look forward to constructive progress.

O'BRIEN: Well, how did your appointment as Ambassador to Honduras come about?

BURROWS: I was appointed by President Eisenhower. Not a political appointment, certainly, it was a career appointment suggested, I'm sure, by the Department of State. I was in Venezuela as Minister Consular. I had hoped—as any ambitious Foreign Service officer hopes—that some day I might be an ambassador. There were several little indications that it might be possible, indications within the Department, but it came as quite a surprise when it did come. And I heard about it, actually, through a friend, a former ambassador, U.S. ambassador, who was then living in Venezuela and who traveled often to Washington on business. He had picked up the news in Washington and called his wife in Caracas.

O'BRIEN: Who was that, just out of curiosity?

BURROWS: Walter Donnelly [Walter J. Donnelly]. He telephoned his wife in Caracas, and all he said was, "Call Mrs. Burrows [Lucy Mullin Burrows] and congratulate her," which she did. My wife called me in the office and said, "What's all this about?" I didn't hear for several days, as a matter of fact, after that. That was in August of 1960, and I left Caracas in September, arriving in

Tegucigalpa on November or so. I came to Washington, first, for the usual briefings and so on.

Congress was not in session at that time, so it was an interim appointment. I never did appear before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, somewhat to my disappointment, because although the first reaction to an appearance before a congressional committee is one of some nervousness I had enough friends on that Committee, I felt, that I would have rather enjoyed it. I had almost hoped that I would be called back

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from Honduras, but I never did have the opportunity to appear before the Committee.

O'BRIEN:               When you say friends, were these associates?

BURROWS:               They were senators who had visited posts where I had been, for example, Venezuela. It just happened that the year before, the Ambassador, who then was Ambassador Sparks [Edward J. Sparks], was absent for a couple or months or more. He was in Washington on Selection Committee duty. And while he was gone, it just happened that there were four congressional groups who came through Caracas, senatorial groups. And all the visits had gone very well, I felt. Also, others on the Committee I had known from previous experience. Not that I was closely involved with any of them, but on a personal basis I felt that our relationships were such that it might have been a rather pleasant experience for me; I wouldn't have expected to be subjected to any great criticism. I suppose that might be attested by the fact that I was not called to appear. I'm sure if they had had any interest in it they would have called me.

O'BRIEN:               Within the Foreign Service I understand there's a debate sometimes on the appointment of ambassadors and people to key positions; a debate between, well, in a sense, the generalists and the specialists. Now you would be considered as a specialist, I assume.

BURROWS:               Well, in area, yes. Geographically, I had served largely in Latin America except for one assignment in the Philippines. I'm not a specialist otherwise, in terms of economics or anything else, although I did economic work in several posts, and I did consular work early in my service, and I did a lot of political work. I would call myself a generalist except for area specialization, which was, I guess, coincidence. It didn't used to happen very often, still doesn't really. I suppose I'm one of the few that served almost entirely in one area of the world.

O'BRIEN:               Did you ever run into any resistance to your appointment as Ambassador within the department because of the...

BURROWS:               No, I never did. There may have been, but I never heard it. As a matter of fact, two or three people were kind enough to say that they hadn't heard any resistance. But if there was I didn't know about it.

O'BRIEN: Well, what do you think of that particular problem on ambassadorial appointments? How do you react to this argument, in a sense between the generalists,

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the people who feel that an ambassador should be a generalist, and the others who feel that he should be a specialist in a certain area?

BURROWS: Well, I rather like the specialization up to a point, function specialization, perhaps early in one's service. The particular stress on economics now is tremendously important. And I think it's very good for any officer to have a solid basis in economic training and reporting early in the game and then to broaden out as he goes along.

I think on the question of area, I would have liked more generalization early in my service and then, later, to have had specialization in the area. I would have liked after one or two assignments in Latin America to go to Europe, I think. I never had any experience in Europe. I found the two years in the Philippines extremely valuable, changed my outlook on things completely. I realized that many of the problems that I had thought of as being pretty world-shaking in the Latin American countries where I had been assigned, faded a little bit by comparison with other problems which I met in the Philippines. I felt I was getting closer to some world problems in the Philippines than I had been in Latin America. Not that the problems that I had faced or was going to face in Latin America were unimportant by any means, but I think I fixed them better in perspective after that one tour of duty outside the area. And that would have been improved, I think, by one or two tours in Europe. But only early in the game, because after I had reached a higher level of not only rank but proficiency in Latin America, I couldn't have served as effectively in Europe as a political councilor or any other capacity, really, at a higher rank as I could serve in Latin America by that time. So I think that area generalization should come earlier in one's service rather than later.

O'BRIEN: Would you say that your reaction towards policies in the late fifties was pretty typical among people who knew Latin America in the department?

BURROWS: I think so, yes. I wasn't striking out on any new ground there with.... I think we all felt the same way.

O'BRIEN: In the time that you were in the Foreign Service and in Venezuela and at Honduras, particularly, did you have any opportunity to meet anyone close in the in-coming administration—either in the Department or in the White House?

BURROWS: In the Kennedy [John F. Kennedy] administration?



O'BRIEN: Right.

BURROWS: No, I didn't, as I recall. I don't think so. The people I dealt with, at least after I reached a high enough rank to be dealing with people of that category, were in the Eisenhower administration—except for the Congress. Both political parties are represented in congressional visiting groups. No, I can't say that I recall any association with the people who later became active in the Kennedy administration.

O'BRIEN: When is the first time that you actually met President Kennedy?

BURROWS: Well, as I say, I was appointed by Eisenhower and went to Honduras. I came back from Honduras in the spring of 1961 and I met President Kennedy, but just a very quick call at that time. So I didn't really know him until '62, I suppose. Of course, we all submitted resignations as usual, and I was very pleased to be confirmed in my appointment by him. I came back on very, very quick trips to Washington in the next year, year and a half, and on one of those trips I did meet the President, but for no long conversation of any kind. Any of that came later.

O'BRIEN: Did you have any opportunity to sit down and talk with people on McGeorge Bundy's staff or in the White House during the...

BURROWS: Not really. Not until 1962, I suppose. It would have been '62—and that was primarily in connection with the visit of the then-president of Honduras to Washington, Villeda Morales [Ramon Villeda Morales], and at that time I did meet people in the White House. And then, also, President Kennedy with some of his people visited Costa Rica and the Central American presidents in 1963. So that entire year from '62 to '63, or even till his death, there was more association for me with the White House, but no close association.

O'BRIEN: Well, were you aware and were, perhaps, people like President Villeda Morales aware of things like—during the campaign—the Tampa speech, which sort of initiated the ideas of the Alliance for Progress, and later the speech to the Latin American diplomatic corps?

BURROWS: Very much aware of it. That was a subject of tremendous excitement, really, created a lot of enthusiasm in Honduras, certainly great interest. To Latin America it was an exciting prospect. I think what it did in Latin America was almost electrifying. As I say, the whole Alliance for Progress idea was exciting as a symbol. The Kennedy

Administration, President Kennedy, invigorated it, brought it alive; but it really isn't entirely fair to give the Kennedy administration all the credit because the concept had begun earlier. It had begun with the President of Brazil who first had the idea or something similar. But certainly Kennedy brought it to life and made it an exciting idea and thought. And certainly Kennedy himself was an exciting figure to Latin America. Pictures of President Kennedy appeared all over Honduras. Now, you can attribute part of that to the USIS [United States Information Service] activities, but not all of it. These pictures appeared in every shack around Honduras. I did a lot of traveling around the country and in every little house of any kind I'd go into, there'd be a picture of President Kennedy on the wall in a very honored spot. The election was of tremendous interest in Honduras. During the election, people were as glued to their radios as they were in the United States. Of course, we had TV, too, but it wasn't quite as effective as a radio. But they were following that election much more closely than one of their own, I think, really.

O'BRIEN: Well, when you came back in 1961, or while you were in Honduras, did you have any contact at all with the Latin American task force, the task force with Berle [Adolf A. Berle, Jr.] and Goodwin [Richard N. Goodwin]?

BURROWS: Not really. Berle came to Honduras while I was there, in 1961. He was there on task force business. He was visiting Honduras and Costa Rica. But other than that, no. I met Dick Goodwin later, in 1962; he came to Honduras on something else. I had no direct contact with the task force other than that.

O'BRIEN: What do you recall about Berle's visit? Was there anything that...

BURROWS: He had been a friend of President Villeda Morales. Villeda Morales had tremendous admiration for him. I had known Berle; I had met him as a very young assistant secretary in 1939 when I first came into the Service. In my class there were some thirty young officers, I guess, and he had us out one Saturday afternoon for a garden party at his house. I was quite excited by him, actually, but I hadn't seen him again, I suppose, after that until he came to Honduras. And I saw quite a bit of him. I think we found each other interesting. He was interested in my thoughts on Honduras and what was going on there.

He liked Villeda Morales; they were friends. I don't think they were as close friends as Villeda Morales painted them as being, but they liked each other. As I say, Villeda Morrales

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admired Berle very much. Also, of course, he was looking for support, Villeda Morales was, not so much within Honduras, but among the international group of liberal leaders of which he liked to consider himself a member: Betancourt [Rómulo Betancourt], Pepe Figueres [José Figueres Ferrer], Muñoz Marin [Luis Muñoz Marin], Puerto Rico. He liked to think of himself as one of that group, and they were close to Adolf Berle. And he was spiritually, at

least, one of that group; he wasn't intellectually, I think, on that level. But he liked to be considered and I think he was sincerely, a liberal. In Honduras, the opposition was very critical of Villeda Morales and professed to believe that he was nothing of an intellectual, that he was a fraud. That he was liberal, yes; they called him a communist. And Villeda Morales felt that, naturally. He was sensitive to the criticism in his own country, and he liked to strengthen himself as an international figure. So a visit from Adolf Berle was very important to him.

O'BRIEN: Well, what were you telling Berle at this point about Honduras? Do you recall any economic problems there, things that might have related to the Alliance?

BURROWS: Well, this was early in the game for me, as well as the Alliance, and I felt that there were a lot of things that could be done in Honduras. I felt that Honduras, as a very poor and very underdeveloped country—a great deal could be accomplished with very little effort and certainly very little expenditure of funds. And I tried to have Honduras thought of as a showcase, insofar as possible, but things really didn't work out that way. I felt that things were too slow to get moving and to get going in terms of projects. I always felt that way about, as a matter of fact.

AID projects always had to go through innumerable clearances and revisions and checkings by somebody else along the line, and many of these projects were not big enough to deserve, really, that much attention. I felt that there should have been more reliance on the local mission to decide that, "This is a good one; let's do it," you know. But, of course, AID was in Washington; they were sitting here with Congress looking over their shoulders. I'm sure in larger countries people felt the same way, although in those larger countries most of the projects cost a lot more money. Perhaps they could have, without too much thought, said, "Oh, go ahead and spend that fifty thousand dollars in Honduras." But a lot of those small ones piling up, or larger ones being handled that way, could have reached a figure that they would have had a tough time justifying before Congress.

I think Berle felt also that a lot could be accomplished in Honduras. But we would have had to take the Hondurans

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more or less by the hands, to lead them, because they weren't ready to do those things themselves. I thought they would learn to do it themselves as they have learned since, but at that time they needed a lot of guidance. And they were ready to take it. They wanted it; they wanted that kind of guidance. Now in many countries they don't really want it. I mean, they would resent too much of that.

In my experience in the Philippines, I found that the Filipinos really wanted some guidance, but they didn't want it to be obvious to anybody else, even to us perhaps—even to admit it to themselves. They realized they needed some help, but they certainly weren't going to admit that to anybody. I think they wanted us, at that time, to give them help but not to act like we were giving them help; to do it in such a way that we were two equals talking about things and agreeing how things ought to be done.

Well, you have to always do that, of course, but I think in Honduras they were quite ready, maybe even too ready, to let us do it. If we could have taken them more by the hand and said, "Come on, let's do it; don't you think this is the way to do it," they would have taken it happily. I think we could have done it; we could have made a lot of progress there. In small projects that wouldn't have cost much. Some of this finally came, but much later.

O'BRIEN: Well, in this period of '59 and '60, and '61—well, '60, '61—what are the major problems in Honduran foreign policy that the United States is involved in?

BURROWS: Well, we never had to worry, really, about Honduras being a friend. They were friends, no question about that. There was a time when we really had no concerns about our foreign policy with Honduras, although within Honduras, there were those, as I say, who claimed that the administration at that time was communist. We wanted Honduras to break relations with Cuba after a certain point.

O'BRIEN: And they did, didn't they, very soon after?

BURROWS: They did and it's very interesting how they did it. Villeda Morales wanted to do this. At one point I went to him, and although I didn't exactly have instructions to encourage him to break relations, things were building in that direction, and I could sense that very clearly. But we wanted them to do it on their own—not to be pushed by us. I was talking about the general situation in Cuba, and he said, "I've been thinking a lot about it. Perhaps we ought to think about breaking relations. But on the other

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hand," he said, "maybe we ought to keep relations because we can help the refugees, people who want to leave Cuba," and he mentioned two or three cases. They had brought quite a few Cubans to Honduras. It was a way station, of course, until they could get into the States, but they were doing quite a bit of it. And he said, "I don't know if we ought to break relations or not. Certainly, if we have no embassy in Cuba, we can't help people get out."

We talked on about various other things, but before I left I said, "Look, I've been thinking all the while about this matter of relations with Cuba," I said, "Why don't you give it some more thought because, really, your breaking relations might mean more to the overall picture than the help you might be able to give to a few refugees who might be able to get out through Honduras, but who might still be able to get out some other way or to find something useful to do in Cuba. And the breaking of relations by Honduras, followed by a lot of others, might lead to something happening in Cuba. Who knows?" Well, then he said, "Yes, I think you may be right." Soon after this there was a large anti-Castro [Fidel Castro] public demonstration which moved to the presidential palace, a large group of people, women and men of all classes; they were from top to bottom in the social strata. And at one point, the President came out on the balcony, got their attention and said in his short remarks,

“Honduras is going to break relations with the Cuban government.” And he then told the press, “The Honduran people demanded it. So of course I had to bow to their wishes and break relations.” He handled it very cleverly, I felt. Really, he was rather acute about the whole thing. And they did break relations. Then he was criticized—he had “suspended relations.” The opposition, the Nationalists, criticized him and said, “No, we never broke relations; we suspended relations. Why didn’t Villeda Morales break relations?” We felt that a “suspension” at that time was as good of a break in relations.

O’BRIEN: Well, did you ever get involved in the border dispute they had going on at that point with Nicaragua?

BURROWS: No, that was pretty much settled before I got there. I’d only been there a week or so when the World Court [International Court of Justice] decided in Honduras’ favor. So about ten days after I arrived we were awakened at 4 o’clock in the morning with fireworks and celebration over the “laudo” Honduras had won.

The way I did get involved—this was indirect—but the “laudo” settled the line, the frontier, except for one little bit at the top of a mountain, the name of which I’ve forgotten

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now, about seventeen square kilometers. Honduras had title confirmed to some seven thousand square kilometers as a result of the ICJ decision. But there were seventeen square kilometers that were still in question. So an OAS [Organization of American State group] came to Honduras headed by Vicente Sánchez Gavito, who was the Ambassador of Mexico to the OAS at that time, to try to resolve that final remaining point.

Of course, this whole issue began not under the Liberal administration, but long before, and the carrying of it to the World Court had begun in earlier administrations. I felt the administration was very honest and fair in its public reaction and in all of their victory celebrations. The principal man at the World Court to represent Honduras had been Dr. Ramon Cruz, a lawyer who was a Nationalist. However the celebration was, insofar as Villeda Morales could make it such, apolitical; it wasn’t a celebration of the Liberal party of the victory. They didn’t call it a victory; they called it a justification. Honduras’ claim had been accepted by the World Court, and judicially they’d been right all along. It had always been their land and now the title was recognized. But nevertheless, the opposition party was not happy at all that this had happened during the administration of the Liberal party. So there were always a lot of sour grapes and efforts to find bases on which to criticize the behavior of Villeda Morales’ administration.

So when Sánchez Gavito and his group—there were two other persons—came in an effort to resolve this thing, they talked to Villeda Morales but could not reach any resolution. They talked to Luis Somoza [Luis Somoza Debayle], president of Nicaragua. No resolution there. There was no give either way. So finally, Sánchez Gavito said to Somoza, “Will you let me settle it? Will you accept my decision on this?” Luis Somoza said, “Yes, I will.” He went to Villeda Morales, and Villeda Morales said, “Yes, I will.” Sánchez Gavito told me about this ahead of time, and I said, “I don’t envy you, but go ahead and do it. That’s

wonderful.” He went down to the area, examined it very carefully and made his decision, and the decision was favorable to Nicaragua.

Well, all hell broke loose in Honduras and the opposition—press and radio and media. You would have thought that Villeda Morales had “sold out” half of Honduras’ territory. What he’d given up was—hadn’t given up; they never even had it, really. But the decision recognized the claim of Nicaragua to these seventeen square kilometers of useless territory—except there had been built there an Army barracks of some kind. I think the Nicaraguans had actually built it. But there was nothing of any worth up there.

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Anyway, the furor over this was unbelievable. By this time Sánchez Gavito had left. The news came out after he left. The media took out after him, you see; he was the fellow that did it. Of course, Villeda Morales had allowed it to be done, but this fellow, Sánchez Gavito, had done this to Honduras. He wouldn’t have dared to go back to Honduras.

I came to Washington very shortly after that and before I left, Sánchez Gavito came to the hotel to see me, and I said, “I’m leaving for the airport. Let’s drive there together.” He was planning a trip through Latin America, he planned to go to Buenos Aires and then stop in every country on the way back. He said, “Do you think I dare—can I stop in Honduras, Chuck?” I said, “Vicente, I don’t think you ought to stop in Honduras, not now. It would not be a pleasant visit for you and your wife [Alejandrina Bermudez de Villeda Morales]. I think you ought to wait awhile.”

I doubt that the Hondurans have forgotten it yet. And I’m sure that if Sánchez Gavito visited Honduras now, there’d be some unpleasantness for him. It’s an amazing thing how sharply they have felt about that. Those border disputes are very hard to work out. Actually, both countries accepted nicely the World Court decision—well, Nicaragua was the one that accepted it. Somoza deserves a lot of credit for that, the way they accepted that decision. It was very, nicely done, and I’m not sure that Honduras would have accepted it as well.

O’BRIEN: Well, how did Hondurans react to the Bay of Pigs?

BURROWS: There’s a long story there, too. The Hondurans were very distressed at the failure. A brief answer to that would be most upset, most upset. When they knew the action had started when the news broke and when the Foreign Minister knew officially that it had happened—I don’t know how much he knew ahead of time. I have no idea what Ydigoras [Miguel Ydigoras Fuentes] of Guatemala had told the Hondurans. Ydigoras knew it in advance what was going to be happening; I didn’t. Nobody was informed of this. I don’t think our Ambassador in Guatemala was ever told by the Department of State. He learned—I shouldn’t speak for him. You ought to talk to him, anyway sometime, John Muccio [John Joseph Muccio]. He’s here in Washington.

O’BRIEN: Yes, I’m going to.

BURROWS: He learned, but I think he learned indirectly about this. He learned something from Ydigoras. I think he probably picked up something

from his own CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] man. I don't believe he was

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told any more by the Department of State than the rest of us were, which was nothing. I wasn't told of anything until just maybe twenty-four hours before—maybe even after it had begun. I was told to go around and tell the President. And it was suggested that I might want to ask for additional protection around the embassy, which I didn't do.

The Foreign Minister knew about it and knew that forces had landed. He called me to his office and said he'd gotten reports that things were not going well. He said, "Ambassador, this is a most important event." Now this, is a man who had been criticized as being leftist within his own country and even outside his own country. He was a member at one time of an international group—I've forgotten the name of it—which was considered quite leftist. I never thought he was. But when this happened, he called me in and said, "Tell your government this must not fail, this must not fail." He said, "The stratagem must succeed." He said, "The United States Government must put into this whatever support is necessary for success."

And I said, "Mr. Foreign Minister, do you mean that we should intervene?" "Yes," he said, "I do." He said, "There are different kinds of intervention." (I never heard him say this on any other occasion.) He said, "There's intervention that's good and there's intervention that's bad, but this is good intervention." I said, "Well, now wait. Do you think that all of your colleagues in Latin America would agree with you on this?" "Oh, no," he said, and "I'll tell you something else. If you intervene, and are successful, there'll be an uproar. Everybody will scream intervention. I will," he said. "I'll scream it, too, for six months; but then it'll be all over. But if you don't intervene and this fails, you'll never forget it, never live it down, never live it down." Well, things were too far along then to—I don't know that I even reported the conversation except later, as background. It was so far along at that point that it wouldn't have made any difference. But in Honduras there was great excitement at first, great anticipation, and they assumed that it was going to be successful. And then there was a tremendous letdown.

O'BRIEN: Did you talk to the President, at that time, about it?

BURROWS: Yes.

O'BRIEN: What was his reaction?

BURROWS: Well, he wanted it to succeed. He was quite pleased that it was being done. But I think I should have been authorized to talk to him sooner. Just before, there had been a meeting on the Guatemalan-Honduran

border in

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Copan, the ruins of Copan, between President Ydigoras and President Villeda Morales. They were accompanied by their own people and by the diplomatic corps accredited to each country. At one point, Ydigoras and Villeda Morales were together in a hotel room, just the two of them, for conversation. And then Ambassador Muccio and I were called in, and we were there, the four of us, talking.... This was never mentioned while I was present, the Bay of Pigs, but Ydigoras said enough to make me realize that something was going on. I didn't know, you see; I didn't even have enough to guess at that point. Muccio knew something. He knew more than I did. He assumed, I guess, that I knew something, too, but I didn't press him. If I wasn't supposed to know, I didn't want to know. Ydigoras said enough to make me realize that he thought I knew something and to make me realize that he and Villeda Morales must have discussed it before Muccio and I went in. Now, I have to assume that Villeda Morales told some people in his administration, but I never had any evidence of that. Nobody ever talked about it to me until it broke and became public. And I never talked about it to Villeda Morales until I was told about it officially.

O'BRIEN: Did you ever get any indication that perhaps any other Honduran officials had some previous knowledge of the Bay of Pigs at all?

BURROWS: No, I didn't. They may have—people were being recruited and so on. But I did not. Now, of course, Honduras had been very much involved in the earlier thing in Guatemala, (the anti-Communist movement) back in 1954, and I would have assumed that some of the people involved in that would have known about this, but I saw no evidence. No one ever said anything to me.

O'BRIEN: Well, what happens in the political climate of Honduras after the Bay of Pigs? Did it strengthen the left at all?

BURROWS: No, it didn't seem to. The Castro people never got any place in Honduras. When I first went there, it looked like they might be gaining ground. But then, when Villeda Morales took his firm position and relations were suspended.... Castro never really got any reception in Honduras. And then, of course, he never evidenced enough he never showed enough, accomplishment in Cuba to impress or interest anyone in Honduras. The Hondurans, in general, did not admire Castro. There was a great letdown, a tremendous disappointment among the people, but it didn't express itself in terms of renewed support for Castro or for the left.

O'BRIEN: Well, about the same time, you terminated the trade

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agreement between the United States and Honduras that gave the United States a very favorable export situation in Honduras. Were you ever involved in any attempts to, perhaps, soften that, the impact of that on Honduras?

BURROWS: Yes, there were many conversations but they had been prepared for it,



they weren't happy, but they took it. It caused problems but not tremendous ones.

O'BRIEN: Did it cause any economic dislocation at all?

BURROWS: Well, some, I suppose, but not—I don't think of any great suffering there for anyone.

O'BRIEN: Well, in '62 you had a series of agrarian laws—reform laws—passed. Were these related to the Alliance in any way?

BURROWS: The Hondurans thought so. Villeda Morales thought so. He had come back from Punta del Este, referring to the meeting there to say that he had committed himself to an agrarian reform and that it was part of the Alliance for Progress. So the law was drafted. It was not a good law. We did not see it in draft. We couldn't get copies of it for a long while. The congress kept it very close. We finally got copies. We felt it was a bad law, and we thought it was going to cause a lot of trouble. It was almost impossible to administer or carry out. I went to Villeda Morales and said, "This is not a good law. It's going to cause you all kinds of trouble, and I think you ought to take a very, very close look at it."

Carson Crocker was AID mission director at that time. His people and our economic officer had gone over it very carefully. They were very distressed about it. I felt the same way.

O'BRIEN: What particularly, do you recall, were the objections?

BURROWS: They had copied a lot of other laws, for example, the Venezuelan agrarian reform law. But they'd put too many things together from too many different places, and it really made it so cumbersome, complicated and involved that it could not have been administered. Theoretically, it provided for payment in cash for whatever lands were taken over. Well, of course they had no cash to pay, and it would have resulted in just seizing the land, that's all. All land had to be under cultivation or in use, or it was subject to expropriation. There was no provision for lands that might have been lying fallow for any purpose at all or for any reserve lands. The fruit companies were going to have tremendous problems with

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it, although I did not place my criticism on that basis alone because that would not have been politically wise or even justifiable; it was a Honduran law.

We did our best. We sent a copy of it to Washington. It was a long, long piece of legislation which we in the mission weren't qualified, we felt, other than as laymen, really, to analyze and evaluate. We wanted some advice from Washington. What would be a good law? Could Washington furnish a model law of some kind that they would like to see enacted? We never got a reply to this from Washington, not a word. There was nobody in

Washington who was prepared to do what we asked, you see. Although everybody theoretically was in favor of agrarian reform at that time, they couldn't give us from Washington any reasonable critique—or didn't, anyway—or any suggestion of the kinds of things that might be included in a law of that kind. So we had nothing.

I went to Villeda Morales and said, "Look, hold this thing up until we've had a chance to look it over more carefully.... We in the Embassy and the AID mission had gotten together specific criticisms of various sections of the law and I gave them to him. I said, "Take a closer look at this." Well, by that time—he said, "It is too late. It's too far along, and I cannot—politically, I can't do anything about it." He'd spoken a lot on radio, saying, "This is the Alliance for Progress, this is what we're doing in Honduras," and so on. "I can't possibly hold this thing up. It's going to be approved in congress." And I said, "Well, do you have to sign it?" "Oh," he said, "I couldn't possibly fail to sign it."

During this time I had been trying to talk to the fruit companies in Honduras about this, but they were not terribly interested. Standard Fruit and Steamship [Company] said, "We can live with it. We can handle it. We can live with it. United Fruit [Company], I got no reaction from until two days before it was approved in the congress. [Interruption] Just before it was approved in the congress (it was all scheduled for final approval), I had a visit from a retired director of United Fruit Company—then living in New Orleans—who had come to Tegucigalpa to tell me that I had to go around to Villeda Morales and make him veto the law.

O'BRIEN:               Who was that?

BURROWS:              Montgomery [Joseph W. Montgomery] was his name. At the same time, the United Fruit Company was battering the doors down here in Washington to get instructions sent to me: "Tell Villeda Morales he has to veto that thing." Well, of course, I didn't do that, nor did Washington instruct

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me to do it. And it was rather ticklish. Washington began to resent pressures from the United Fruit Company, as I did too at that point, because Villeda Morales could not really, politically, have vetoed the law. I think he had in mind signing it, as he had to do, he felt politically, but doing something about it afterwards. He told me that he had that in mind when I asked about it later. I wondered if he'd be able to do it.

But then, right afterward, he did sign it. And United Fruit did what was their only means of reaction in this case; they stopped their planting program. They were involved in a very large banana planting program, switching over to a variety fruit, and a large planned expansion. But they felt that with this agrarian reform law on the books they just could not afford to proceed. So they stopped. They stopped just like that.

O'BRIEN:               Now, Standard Fruit at the same time is...

BURROWS:              Standard Fruit was saying, "Well, we can live with it. We can live with it. We can work it out somehow, this is our problem." So they never

stopped anything; they continued on. Maybe they didn't stop because they knew United Fruit was going to carry the ball, I don't know. I don't think so, but they might have.

Right after that, Villeda Morales made his trip to Washington and while he was here there was discussion about the problem with President Kennedy. The United Fruit people saw Villeda Morales in Miami on his way back, and they had a very satisfactory conversation there. Villeda Morales told them that he would get the law revised. He promised that within the next six months there would be a revision, and there was. There was a new law on the books. He got a new law, a completely new law put through which removed a great many of the bad features of the original legislation—and made it livable for private interests.

Under the law as originally drafted, any lands which were declared to be not properly or productively used could be earmarked by the Agrarian Reform Institute for expropriation. If those lands were not within a certain period of time put into production or utilized in some acceptable manner, then a tax would be assessed, which would increase rapidly in annual stages so that after five years, the tax would have become confiscatory and more than the land was worth. And there was no judicial review; there was no appeal to the courts, anything. It was all in the hands of the one man who was directing the Agrarian Reform Institute, in effect. That was the bad part of it all.

O'BRIEN: That was...

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BURROWS: That was all changed. When the new law came out, there was provision for judicial review. There was more of a stretch out on the length of time to get lands put into use, expropriated lands were to be paid for in a manner that was ostensibly possible (not cash), and there was a more understanding approach to the whole problem.

By the time the new law was reported out, as soon as that was done, United Fruit started a planting program again. By that time, six months after the original law had been approved, United Fruit operations had dropped off very markedly and many people had lost their jobs. There's always been a lot of criticism of United Fruit Company, or of the fruit companies, but United Fruit is the one that was known as "the fruit company" and that was the object of political criticism in these countries. But the minute the planting program was resumed the United Fruit Company became beloved again in Honduras, because people by that time realized what the company meant to Honduras. The economic backbone of the country has so far been the banana industry and it still is. They couldn't just—nobody in Honduras could just quietly watch the fruit companies pack up and leave, you know.

O'BRIEN: Well, did they...

BURROWS: It finally worked out all right.

O'BRIEN: Was there much objection to the labor laws, the labor reform laws, that were, as I understand, incorporated in that, weren't they?

BURROWS: The principal objections to labor legislation were in 1954. That was the first labor law. At the time, many of the employers in Honduras said, “We can’t live with this. It can’t be done; we just can’t live with this.” But then with time they realized they could.

O’BRIEN: Did United Fruit get involved with that at all, with these labor reform laws?

BURROWS: Yes, back in ‘54 they did. There had been a strike, a very serious strike, against United Fruit because of its opposition to the law, which almost ruined the country. And that’s been the only serious strike they’ve had in Honduras, really, that big strike against the fruit company in ‘54. The next strike of any consequence at all really, was a strike in 1963 against another American employer operating a mine. And he had a strike that went on for a long time and that received, deservedly I felt, a lot of critical attention in Honduras.

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But really, the law, which was so much feared when it was passed, turned out to be acceptable. With time, of course, other things began to catch up, and people began to realize that it wasn’t such an extreme law after all, that the world went on, after all.

O’BRIEN: Well, how does an organization like United Fruit actually negotiate a deal with the government of Honduras? Now obviously they came to you in an attempt to apply pressure, which you did not.

BURROWS: That’s the only time during the years that I was there there was anything like that. And I think that United Fruit really felt so directly threatened by this law and they realized that they—at least their position was that they just could not breathe under that law. That was the only time I had anything like that from the United Fruit Company. Normally, certainly they would make their initial contact with the minister of whatever ministry might be involved—the ministry of economy, of labor, whatnot and sometimes endeavor to get embassy support.

They play a very quiet role in Honduras now, both those companies. The United Fruit Company is very frank that in the 20’s and 30’s they deserved a lot of the criticism they received. But they’ve changed; they’re not that way any longer. No, they play the role of a good citizen, I think. I think most Hondurans recognize that. They are still the whipping boys; it’s always convenient politically to bring in the United Fruit Company somehow—almost extraneously sometimes.

It was very funny, I thought, when at the inauguration of Lopez [Oswaldo Lopez Arellano] as President after he was elected. This was after the *golpe* and the provisional government period and then, finally, the election. The inauguration was at the National Theatre. The invited guests and the diplomatic corps were seated in boxes above and around the orchestra seats. The inauguration ceremony took place on the stage. There were some

guests, not very many, invited from outside the country. The Mayor of New Orleans was there. The two fruit companies were invited to attend. The president of Standard Fruit Company and the vice president of United Fruit, the three or four ranking officials from both companies were there. The diplomatic corps, as I said, was also seated in the boxes around the semicircle. In the front box on the left was the Standard Fruit Company; in the front box on the right was United Fruit Company. [Laughter] When I saw this, I thought, “My God!” You know, it took me by surprise—I chuckled. And I thought, “Gosh, we’re going to hear about this. Somebody’s going to bring this

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to public attention.” It was never mentioned as far as I know in the media at all. It was accepted as a matter of course that they should be there, you see, and in that prominent kind of position.

O’BRIEN: Well, someday, someone like John Gerassi will discover that.

BURROWS: Oh, he’ll have fun with it.

O’BRIEN: Oh well.

BURROWS: I would like to mention a couple of things about that visit of Villeda Morales up here. Now, I think this is interesting, some of this. There’s a little history involved that should be mentioned first. He, of course, wanted to come to Washington, as any president does, especially any Latin American president. In 1960, before I was there—Villeda Morales had not been invited by the U.S. Government, but he planned a trip to Miami. He was invited by Cuban refugees to come to Miami. I think that was the excuse. He came to our then-ambassador Robert Newbegin and said, “I am going to Miami for this purpose, I just wanted to let you know.”

Newbegin knew, of course, that a president should not come to Miami without coming to Washington. So his first thought was to get him invited to Washington as an extension of or prior to the Miami trip. Well, that did not work. The department did not grant him to come to the U.S. It’s not proper for a president to come to this country unless he comes to the capital, and we didn’t want him to come to the capital at that time, for some reason. The U.S. Government was not prepared to invite him, even on one of the unofficial visits. So Newbegin, in effect—more than in effect—finally was told directly, “Tell President Villeda Morales he should not come to Miami.” By that time he already had been invited to come to New Orleans, too, I think by maybe Standard or United, I don’t know. Anyway...

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O’BRIEN: Okay. Would you like to proceed?

BURROWS: At that time there may have been—I’m sure there was a lot of discussion between Newbegin and Villeda Morales about this, but I’m

sure that Newbegin never brought himself to tell Villeda Morales, “You cannot go to Miami.” Anyway, finally, the department relaxed enough so that Villeda Morales

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did go to Miami and may have gone to New Orleans, I don’t know. But he went right straight back to Tegucigalpa without visiting Washington. That was in 1960. Well, I knew about this because Newbegin had told me it was a very difficult matter for him to handle, naturally. Well, the next little episode that’s involved began with one of the first groups of Peace Corps volunteers in Latin America—the group that came to Honduras. Jack Vaughn had come to Honduras early on to sell this idea of the Peace Corp and he found a very receptive ear in Alejandrina Morales, as well as President. She was fascinated by the whole idea.

So in early 1962 the first group of volunteers was being trained to go to Honduras. Mrs. Villeda Morales came to the United States, went to Kansas or wherever it was they were training, stayed with them for at least three weeks—and then, en route back to Tegucigalpa, came to Washington, hoping to meet Mrs. Jacqueline B. Kennedy [Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy] informally. You know how easily they think these things are done, these smaller countries. Well, she got no place. Because she was not here officially, Mrs. Kennedy was not interested in seeing her.

Mrs. Shriver [Eunice Kennedy Shriver] heard about this, was distressed that Mrs. Villeda Morales wasn’t able to see Mrs. Kennedy, and said to Mrs. Villeda Morales, “Look, I’ll get you in the White House”—you know, the back door, sort of—“and we’ll see Mrs. Kennedy.” Mrs. Villeda Morales said, “I’m the wife of a president and I’m not going to go in by the back door,” and she went back home—not too happy about it, really. She felt that she’d been shown the back of the hand by Jackie Kennedy, which was not entirely fair to Mrs. Kennedy. You know though, if Mrs. Kennedy had come to Tegucigalpa and wanted to see Mrs. Villeda Morales, she certainly could have done it. Anyway, they—and that’s an old story, too, because everybody who goes to those countries of any slight consequence expects to call on the presidents. Naturally, they can’t do that here. Coming from those countries they don’t even see the Secretary of State very often. That’s always a little hard to explain, too.

But then in ’62, it must have been, Villeda Morales told me he was invited again to Miami by a group of Cubans to address them on a certain occasion. And he wanted to let me know about this. Well, I knew what was in the back of his mind, and I felt very clear in my own mind that I didn’t want him to go through the same experience that he’d had two years before. So I began getting busy to get him somehow invited to Washington on some kind of visit, not the official or most protocolary visit, but something, anyway.

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Well, it took a great, great deal of doing to get that accomplished because the President, naturally, is very carefully protected on these presidential visits at that time. I think we had resolved that President Kennedy would have a total of maybe one visit a month from foreign presidents, heads of state. But we finally, after a great deal of effort and a lot of hard work at the Washington end, arranged that he would come on an unofficial visit to

Washington, involving the minimum of attention and protocol. It *was* a visit to Washington, and he *would* see the President.

O'BRIEN: Now, who were you dealing with in doing this, the Office of Protocol?

BURROWS: No. I was dealing through the desk and the assistant secretary, and they with Protocol.

O'BRIEN: I see.

BURROWS: It finally got worked out. But then, before they came, the Colombian President visited Washington. It was an official visit, and there was a dinner party, I think, given by the President. But Mrs. Kennedy was not there, she was unavailable. It was during the period when she wasn't doing these things. The word was that Mrs. Kennedy was not well, and that the President's mother, Rose Kennedy [Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy], would officiate, which she did. But the day that the dinner party was reported in the press, there was also a press report and picture of Mrs. Kennedy water-skiing with—who's the early astronaut?—John Glenn, up in Massachusetts or someplace.

Well, that, of course, went around the world, and Mrs. Villeda Morales began to get very nervous and upset about her probable reception. This was very close to the date of the Villeda Morales visit. And then I received the word that Mrs. Kennedy probably would not receive Mrs. Villeda Morales. Now, I never told her that, but Mrs. Villeda Morales was beginning to realize that she probably wouldn't be received by Mrs. Kennedy. She was very upset.

The wife of the Foreign Minister finally came to the residence to talk to my wife, and said, "Alejandrina is not going to get off that airplane if she sees Mrs. Kennedy is not there to receive her." My wife replied, "It is not customary for the President to go to the airport to receive visitors." "Well, Mrs. Villeda Morales will get back on the airplane and come right back to Honduras if she realizes that Mrs. Kennedy is not going to receive her." Of course, she wanted to see Jackie; Jackie was a fantastic figure to all of them, and Mrs. Villeda Morales wanted to see her. But also,

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she wanted to be properly received in a manner that she considered proper.

By that time the visit had worked up to a lot more than it was in the beginning; it wasn't the usual official visit. We had a delegation going from Honduras of five couples, I think. They were going to get to the states on their own, but from Key West they were to proceed on a presidential plane. They were going to do everything included in an official visit except a presidential dinner; there wasn't going to be that. They were going to stay at Blair House. There would be a state dinner hosted by the Secretary of State [Dean Rusk], not by the President. So it was almost an official visit by that time.

But it looked like Mrs. Kennedy wasn't going to receive Mrs. Villeda Morales. So I frantically wrote a letter to somebody, probably the director of the office at that time, setting

this all down and saying, “My God, if she’s not going to receive Mrs. Villeda Morales, let’s call the whole thing off because it’ll cause more damage than goodwill. This is not the way to handle this at all. This is terrible.” I wrote a very frank—some may even say tough—letter. Well, I knew by the time we got here—I got word before the party left that, yes, Mrs. Kennedy would be available, would be present when they arrived. Well, I thought, “Thank God for that.”

Now, I was authorized to come with the party but my wife was not. Five couples (six with us), all very close friends and they were a very attractive delegation, lovely ladies who assumed that my wife was coming with them, you see. And they said, “Of course your Lucy is coming with us.” And I said, “No, she is not coming.” “Yes, of course she is.” Well, I decided yes, she will—of course at my expense. But there wasn’t much expense involved because the President Villeda Morales had gotten a plane to fly from Tegucigalpa to Key West and the presidential plane from there to Washington; but in Washington, my wife was on her own. She wasn’t a part of the group. I was on per diem; she wasn’t. You know, one of those little things that no one gives any thought to. Since then, they’ve changed it, I think. And wives do come along on trips of that kind.

The first night we were to spend in Williamsburg en route from Key West to Washington. “At Williamsburg?” the President said, “What’s that? Strange, “I never *heard* of Williamsburg.” Again, they thought they were being put off and getting something less than first-class treatment. So, of course I had to go through the act of what Williamsburg was and how all the VIPs stopped here en route to Washington—to spend the first night and to arrive fresh in Washington the next morning and so on. A lovely place; they would find it fascinating. But they still

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weren’t convinced. They still weren’t convinced that this wasn’t something that they were being put off with.

The plane stopped at Newport News. I got off and came on to Washington to see the President early the next morning. My wife stayed with the group. And right there she paid for her trip. She’s full of enthusiasm, and she loves Williamsburg, anyway, and to see it under those special circumstances as lovely as it was, with the candlelight dinner—special dinner by candlelight in the Governor’s Palace—and all that. She just bubbled and explained it all to them chattering all the time in Spanish and—nobody else could have done it, you see. But she conveyed her enthusiasm to them, and by the time they got to Washington they were pleased and happy as punch and everything was wonderful. They realized that they’d really gotten in on something special in Williamsburg.

The morning of their arrival I was in the White House forty-five minutes ahead of time to give the President a last minute briefing. Almost the first thing I saw when I walked in to his office was the letter which I’d written about Jackie not receiving Mrs. Villeda Morales. I thought, “Good God, this is my last visit to Washington, I guess, or anyplace else.” The President was very charming though, very nice. He said, “What can we do, do you think? What do you think they will expect?” And I said, “I don’t think they’ll expect very much, but I know they will have a few small requests. The President will ask for only a few



things along the line of aid, things that fit nicely into our program, I think. I don't think he has any surprises for you at all."

And he said, "What do you think"—and he picked up my letter at that point. He said, "I understand the lady may not be too happy." I said, "No, she's fine now. She realizes now that Mrs. Kennedy is going to be present when she arrives, that's all that's necessary." He said, "Well, do you think Jackie ought to do something else? Do you think Mrs. Villeda Morales might like to go upstairs with Jackie afterwards for a little private conversation?" I said, "She'd love it. That would *make* the trip—for the whole group, and would really set things up." So he picked up the telephone, and he said, "Jackie, why don't you take the Señora upstairs for a few minutes afterward, while I'm talking with the President."

So it worked that way, and everything was perfect. For the first time—Jackie presented the honored visitor with a bouquet of red roses, which she hadn't done before. That started a precedent, I believe, for later visits. She took Mrs. Villeda Morales upstairs for forty-five minutes. They

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sat in the nursery and talked while the children played around their knees. For Mrs. Villeda Morales it was the high point of the trip. And of course, it became the high point—public relations wise.

Well, actually, the visit also went very well for President Villeda Morales. But he didn't request a thing, didn't mention anything he wanted. You know, any visiting president is going to try to go away with something in his hand, and I was afraid he wasn't going to get anything to go back with. Since he hadn't asked for anything.

I couldn't understand it until on the return trip—I didn't go back to Miami with them because Villeda Morales was going to meet with the Cuban refugees. I went to Miami later and then flew back from there with them to Tegucigalpa. On that return trip, the Foreign Minister told me what had happened. He said, "We were all briefed for this meeting and we couldn't believe our ears. The Doctor [Villeda Morales] said nothing about the things that we had talked about asking for." And I said, "Why didn't he?" "Oh," he said, "I think he forgot it. I think he was so overcome with the reception that he forgot it. He told us afterwards that at a time like that you don't make requests. It wouldn't be gracious to do it that way and to ask for things."

O'BRIEN: Well, when you were in there before the visit, in a sense briefing President Kennedy, was there anyone else in with you, in the White House staff at all?

BURROWS: No.

O'BRIEN: Did you talk to anyone else in the White House at that time about Honduras?

BURROWS: A little with Ralph Dungan [Ralph A. Dungan] perhaps but most of this had been done in advance. I talked with Angie Biddle Duke

[Angier Biddle Duke], the chief of protocol, but everything had been taken care of and the President didn't really need any further briefing from me. The only thing I accomplished at that time was to enforce the idea that Mrs. Kennedy receive Mrs. Villeda Morales.

O'BRIEN: That's a fascinating story.

BURROWS: The entire party was so happy about this. They all got autographed framed photographs of the President, of course. The Foreign Minister, who was hoping to be a candidate in the next election, had his picture taken with President Kennedy in his office.

O'BRIEN: Let's go over the names of the people on that delegation

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at that time. Who was the Foreign Minister? Was it...

BURROWS: Andres Alvarado Fuerto and Berta, his wife; the President, of course, and Mrs. Villeda Morales, Alejandrina Villeda Morales, Minister of Economy, Jorge Bueso [Jorge Bueso Arias] and his wife. Mr. and Mrs. Jack Agurcia [Lisette Fasquelle de Agurcia; Juan Agurcia Ewing]—Agurcia was the presidential secretary; and a military aide whose name I've forgotten. But it was a very, very nice group, a very presentable group. I'm sure that there couldn't have been a more presentable presidential group.

As a matter of fact, in Williamsburg, Carlisle Humelsine [Carlisle Humelsine] told my wife, "This is really one of the nicest groups we've had." They get some rather strange ones I think—at least to us some may seem a little strange. There wasn't too much English within the group except for the two Agurcias and Jorge Bueso, was very easy and very nice, very cordial and pleasant, friendly, and enthusiastic, pleased by what was being done.

When they got to Washington and were in Blair House, they couldn't understand why my wife and I weren't also staying at Blair House. And I said, "We're not supposed to stay in Blair House; that's your accommodation." But they were so excited and, as I say, so impressed by the whole thing that Villeda Morales forgot to ask for anything at all.

O'BRIEN: Did he have some conversations with George Ball [George W. Ball] when he was here?

BURROWS: Yes, he did.

O'BRIEN: You didn't get any insights into that at all, did you?

BURROWS: Villeda Morales had many conversations in Blair House with a great many people, Ball was one of them. I sat in on some; some I did not.

There were several people who talked to him about the agrarian reform law, for instance, but I don't think he required any convincing on that.

A follow-up on that visit and to President Kennedy's acquaintance with Mrs. Villeda Morales, or hers with him, came when President Kennedy visited Costa Rica to meet with the presidents of Central America, a tremendously exciting occasion. This little town of San Jose was certainly not equipped to handle a thing of that kind, but everybody in the whole country just threw himself into. There was not the slightest suggestion of anything unfriendly that I saw while I was there. Security measures were as good as they could contrive, but I'm sure they were far from complete. There were all kinds of occasions for something to have happened. Nothing happened—nothing except tremendous enthusiasm all the time. Because I had an American

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flag on my car, people would shout and applaud and scream and try to stop the car and shake my hand as I was driving through. It was really a very exciting couple of days. While we were there, Mrs. Villeda Morales had a chance to discuss with President Kennedy a pet project, a rehabilitation institute that she wanted to get going in Tegucigalpa for the treatment of cripples. There were a lot of these poor people in Tegucigalpa. They had started; the clinic was underway, but they didn't have any equipment. They couldn't do much and they needed something to boost them along. They had tried to convert it into an AID project but AID Washington would not approve it; it wasn't a proper project. There was very little money involved and I thought that we should find some way to help because of the tremendous public impact such an action would have. Anyway, we had gotten no place with it.

She was so anxious to say something to President Kennedy, she thought he would do something. Wouldn't I say something and I said, "No, I don't think that is the way to handle this, Mrs. Villeda Morales; there has already been a policy decision against it. Why don't you do it?" I said, "You'll have a chance tonight at the dinner party. Catch him then at the dinner party." Well, I sort of kept my eye on that table all evening until I saw President Kennedy, getting up to dance briefly with each one of the ladies. And that was the only time, really, that she could have talked to him because, you know, it was a large crowded and noisy party and she wasn't sitting next to him. Anyway, she did get her chance, and I went up to the table after she'd danced and leaned over and said, "Did you speak to President Kennedy?" "Oh yes, I did. He was very receptive."

Well, the next morning Kennedy was having a few minutes of private conversation with each president, a half hour or forty-five minutes, to talk over individual matters of interest. So—before he saw Villeda Morales, I had.... Again, each ambassador had a few minutes with him to prepare him a bit. And he said, "What is this rehabilitation institute that Mrs. Villeda Morales is so interested in?" Theodoro Moscoso was in the room, also. And I explained what it was, and the President said, "Well, what's involved? What do they want from me? What does she want? How much money do they want?" "Oh," I said, "seventy-five thousand dollars would be quite enough for this purpose. I think it's a good thing; I think it would be wonderful if they could do it. I think we ought to try to help them somehow." And the President turned to Moscoso, "Look Ted, find seventy-five thousand dollars to take care of them, can't you?" Ted wasn't happy about it, really, but he couldn't do anything at that

point, and Kennedy went further and said, "Get this taken care of while we're here so when Villeda Morales gets back to

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Tegucigalpa he can announce it when he gets off the airplane." Then, of course, he told Villeda Morales later what was going to be done. Moscoso was not happy, but he had instructions. I left San José in advance so that I could be in Tegucigalpa to receive President Villeda Morales when he arrived there. So I was back an hour or two before he arrived, and I dashed to the office to make sure the project was all set. And it was all set. They had received word at the AID office in Tegucigalpa and had begun all the necessary arrangements. I dashed back to the airport and Villeda Morales left the airplane, I was able to tell him "It's all set now, the rehabilitation institute will go forward." So, of course, there was a big fanfare. They could make their announcement.

It was the kind of thing that appealed to President Kennedy, you know. There was a lot of public interest involved there. The public impact was tremendous at very little cost, and it *did* accomplish something: it was a small developmental project. It was putting a certain number of people back into constructive life; it was a matter of giving an artificial leg or limb, you know.

O'BRIEN: Well, I wonder if we could go over that Costa Rican visit a little more closely. A number of things, of course, were discussed, but I guess the logical place to begin is with your impressions of it, the beginnings of it.

BURROWS: Well, there was an invitation from the Central American presidents, of course, to Kennedy, and I think Villeda Morales conveyed it when he was in Washington. That was the first mention of it, I think, to Kennedy: Would he visit them in Central America? I think at first there must have been a certain amount of resistance in Washington because, in the first place, to which of the capitals would he go and not offend the others, you see. It was generally felt that he couldn't go to Nicaragua; that would have been the least acceptable, with the Somozas' image, for the more liberal element in the U.S. He shouldn't go to Guatemala; Ydigoras seemed a bit unstable, anyway. Salvador was too small. Certainly not Tegucigalpa; there were no facilities; it couldn't have been handled there. Costa Rica seemed far too small, too, but it was finally decided that they might be able to get away with it in Costa Rica. The facilities are really inadequate, but still, it would be done with goodwill on the part of everybody, and certainly in the event everybody's goodwill was present.

People moved out of their houses and turned them over to others. The President, our president, went into the American embassy although the embassy really wasn't large enough. The

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Ambassador and his family moved out. They moved into the home of friends down the street, a couple of blocks, took over their friends' house—I guess their friends went someplace else. That was the kind of atmosphere that was present. Everybody doubled up and took people in, and it was just a very happy occasion all around—an exciting occasion as I said before. And it worked out, really very successfully, much more successfully and with fewer problems than anybody would have anticipated before it happened. It could have been just a complete mess, you know.

O'BRIEN: Do you remember anything of the remarks that President Kennedy made on coming or at the.... I understand he addressed the embassy staff and a number of people that day.

BURROWS: Yes. Frankly, I can't remember very much of what he said. The reception was near the old airport in the city. They had stands constructed and there was a tremendous crowd of people, and the President arrived by helicopter from the airport amid tremendous enthusiasm. I had driven from Tegucigalpa because there weren't going to be enough automobiles. I'd taken my car. It was a new car, and when I got back to the car—the chauffeur had parked as close as he could, of course, for me—people had been standing on the hood and on the trunk, and it was all scratched up. [Laughter] They were getting up to look, you know. But everything was in such good spirit.

The last place the President went during his visit was to the university. People were a little nervous about that one, but there was no problem. And again, he came from the university by helicopter direct to the airport and left just as the volcano was beginning to erupt. Costa Rica suffered for the next year from that terrible eruption of their volcano.

O'BRIEN: Do you remember anything about the discussions that were held, either among, well, yourself and some of the other ambassadors and perhaps Secretary Rusk and some of the other delegations that came down, or among the Central American presidents?

BURROWS: No, they had their open meeting at the Teatro Nacional. The six presidents (five C.A. presidents, the President of Panama and President Kennedy) talked privately. Actually, there were seven, as there were two from Nicaragua; the President-elect and the actual president were both there. But they had a private session, and none of the ambassadors was present for that, but I understood there was nothing significant.

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At the public session, which was in the theatre.... Every president offered remarks and they were long and they went on and on and on, except for Ydigoras. They got to Ydigoras and—what was it that Ydigoras said? It was something along this vein: Ydigoras said that he was pleased to be there, pleased to meet President Kennedy. “We have all come in hope of getting aid but Guatemala will not ask.” That's all he said, period. As I said

before, he was sort of unpredictable. But all of them made speeches, long speeches, about the Alliance for Progress and about things they felt that Central America should be doing. There was much emphasis on the Central American Common Market by that time, and on integration. I cannot give you more than you can get from the documents available because I have no sidelights on anything else.

O'BRIEN: Was this the first time you met Dick Goodwin?

BURROWS: Goodwin came to Honduras, I believe, in 1962. I met him there for the first time. He stayed in the residence. He and Mike Barall [Milton Barall] and John Leddy [John M. Leddy] came to Honduras to attend an early meeting of the ministers of economy—early in the sense of Central American integration. That was before Costa Rica.

O'BRIEN: What were your impressions of Goodwin?

BURROWS: Well, brilliant, of course. I felt he was very brilliant, very smart. I found him also to be an abrasive personality. I guess that's the best way to....

O'BRIEN: Abrasive in the sense of...

BURROWS: Personally.

O'BRIEN: Personally?

BURROWS: Yes, the way he acted. I didn't think he handled himself well on occasion. They were there for one of the early meetings of the ministers of economy of the Central American Common Market in integration development. John Leddy was there for Treasury; Mike Barall from State; of course Goodwin from the White House. He was looked upon by the ministers as the President's personal representative.

At the first meeting there were all the usual public statements, and Goodwin said something that made it clear there was to be a message from President Kennedy. Maybe they'd asked him if there wasn't something from President Kennedy, and he said, yes, there would be a message. Anyway,

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the session broke up with the understanding that the message from President Kennedy was coming.

Well, that night Goodwin stayed up late at the residence in his room and by the next morning he had drafted President Kennedy's message. He said, "Let's get this translated and typed up." So we got it translated and typed up. It was read the next day in Spanish, at the next session. There was nothing earthshaking, but there were some statements that might

have been considered policy commitments. And the ministers found it very interesting. They loved it, and then they said, "We'll get the original of this, of course?" "Oh, yes, it will be coming along later. This is just a cable copy that arrived this morning."

Well, for the next two months every time I saw the Foreign Minister he'd ask me about President Kennedy's message, when he was going to get it. Of course it never came. It was never cleared in Washington, never came out. It was all Dick Goodwin's, entirely his. Well, it was that kind of thing that I didn't go for.

O'BRIEN: He had a reputation for that sort of thing.

BURROWS: Of course there was no record, there was no written record. They had nothing. All they had was what he'd read. They never were given anything else.

O'BRIEN: Do you recall anything in the way of discussions with other people, like Senator Fulbright [J. William Fulbright] was there, Senator Hickenlooper [Bourke B. Hickenlooper], Senator Morse [Wayne L. Morse], as well as Ed Martin [Edwin M. Martin] and Moscoso?

BURROWS: Yes, yes I know. No, I don't recall anything specific.... I remember one reaction from Hickenlooper, I guess it was. We were all sitting there listening to these long speeches by the presidents, and he got *very* uncomfortable, and he turned around to somebody in a very audible voice, speaking to one of the other Senators, and said, "My God, how long is this going to go on?" When one of the presidents was talking. But no, I had no.... I knew most of them, but other than personal, informal comments, I had no conversation with them.

O'BRIEN: Well, let's pass back to some Cuban things for a while and perhaps the left in Honduras. Did you have much contact with people, in a sense on the left of the Liberal party, not necessarily Castro supporters, but people who were sympathetic to Castro?

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BURROWS: There were not very many that would admit to being friendly to Castro. I had no personal contact with anybody, I think, who talked about Castro in a favorable way. There were extreme leftists in the country and in both parties, as a matter of fact, but no one who ever talked to me about what a great man Castro was, what wonderful things he was doing in Cuba. That was pretty much covert as far as—except for, again, the radio. You see, the people could get Cuba on their transistor radios in Honduras. They could pick it up quite readily on the North Coast, and that was the only effective means of propaganda I think, whatever effect that had. There was very little effective being done within Honduras by the Cubans except around the banana farms on the North Coast.

O'BRIEN: Well, President Villeda Morales makes a rather significant policy statement in September in which he calls for, as I understand it, the removal of Castro. It was in September of 1962. What went into that? Was that a spur-of-the-moment thing on his part, or was it...

BURROWS: That followed a number of conversations that we'd had. I didn't know he was planning a statement, but I realized afterwards he must have made a lot of preparation. It all began with a popular demonstration, I suspect planned officially. Is that what you're talking about, when he came out on the balcony and talked to the crowd?

O'BRIEN: Well, I just had a date of September 18th, 1962. I'm not quite sure of the sequence of events.

BURROWS: Yeah, it was just prior to his trip to Washington. We'd had visiting in Tegucigalpa a Cuban, a very fiery Cuban refugee, who had come there to whip-up enthusiasm against Castro—I can't think of his name now—who, again, was at the Teatro Nacional (that's where they had everything). I remember being present; Villeda Morales was there. He came and sat in his box, listened all through the speech, although at one point this chap was talking in such a way—with reference to the President—that I would not have blamed Villeda Morales for getting up and leaving, actually. He was talking very unjustly about the President not doing what he should have been doing, and so on. This was before the break in relations, of course.

Now it's possible that that had an influence on Villeda Morales' decision to do this at that time, you see. But he must have arranged the setting. He must have been sure there wasn't to going to be any political reaction with his own party, because he had a lot of extreme leftists in the party. There were several deputados—and one in particular

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who had actually spent some time in Cuba with Castro. He was a Castrista, and he had a few people around him, but not many. So there was a small element within the government ready to treat with Castro at that time, and, of course, the opposition claimed that everyone in the government felt that way. Well, they didn't. I know they didn't. Actually, Villeda Morales more or less, I think confounded his opposition when he came out the way he did. I'm sure he had to have set that up pretty well. He didn't want to have any trouble with it. And it was ahead of anybody else in Latin America. It was very early in the game.

O'BRIEN: We have the missile crisis coming along about this time. Now, are you informed about that?

BURROWS: No, I was not informed.... You mean about what was happening?

O'BRIEN: Yes, before President Kennedy made the announcement.



BURROWS: I don't think I had a thing. Until the President made the announcement, I hadn't heard a thing.

O'BRIEN: Were you instructed to make any contacts with Villeda Morales?

BURROWS: Yes, and he was in full agreement with us.

O'BRIEN: Who else did you contact?

BURROWS: The Foreign Minister.

O'BRIEN: Did anyone come down from Washington at all?

BURROWS: No.

O'BRIEN: You were mainly instructed at that point to tell them about what was going on?

BURROWS: Yes, that's right. It was a matter of advising; it wasn't a matter of consulting—the time was too short. I think it was done much better on that occasion, though, than on the Dominican Republic thing.

O'BRIEN: Were you instructed to ask them for support in regard to—in the OAS, this consultative meeting with foreign ministers later?

BURROWS: Yes, and no problems as far as Honduras was concerned. On things like that, there was never any question at all; they were right with us, for whatever that

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meant. I mean, that doesn't mean anything materially or physically, but by the vote they were always with us on anything of that kind.

O'BRIEN: Well, there are a few questions on the Alliance that I'd like to pursue if you could. When does it really first get off the ground—or does it—in Honduras?

BURROWS: Well, I think it does. I think it was getting off the ground when the revolution occurred in 1963, in October of '63. I think things were moving along. We felt we had a pretty good program lined up, and AID was beginning to move. We thought we could see some good results shaping up. Then came the *golpe* just two weeks before the election was scheduled, the presidential election.

That *golpe* was like striking people here in Washington across the cheek with a glove, you know, at least Moscoso, because this was the fourth one in fairly quick succession—

Peru, Guatemala, Dominican Republic and then, ten days later, Honduras. And that's what did it, particularly the Dominican Republic and then Honduras. And Honduras and the Dominican Republic were put in the same basket; they were the same kind of revolution or *golpe* as far as Washington was concerned. We suspended relations. We cut all of AID off. Moscoso wanted to cut CARE off, CARE deliveries. He wanted to cut Catholic Relief off, everything, everything.

O'BRIEN: How about the Peace Corps?

BURROWS: He even wanted to cut Peace Corps, definitely, yes; he would have, but it never was done.

O'BRIEN: It never did occur.

BURROWS: That stopped everything, of course, naturally. All of our programs stopped. I felt it was wrong. In the first place, I felt it was wrong to withdraw diplomatic representatives at that time because it cut our communications fairly effectively. I wouldn't have minded—and I think we should on occasions like that, if we have strong feelings about it—cutting off certain government program support, financial support and so on, but many of these AID programs were vital to Central American integration which was just getting started. They were people-to-people programs. The people back in the hinterlands were beginning to see some results, and suddenly for reasons that they could not understand, it stopped. They don't know what it's all about—except that they're not going to get their water project and they're not going to get anything else.

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Well, the whole thing was stopped. Officially it was stopped, supposedly, for three months. But then there were another three or four months before we even got a staff back in for AID. So the whole thing had to start all over again. We came back. In some ways you can say it was good because there were many things in the previous program that needed refining and correction, and we were able to drop a lot of projects that weren't very good and start with others that were better, perhaps. But it set the whole thing back, as far as Honduras was concerned, by a year at least. And of course, it had an effect on Central America, too, on the other countries. So it took a long time to really get going again.

O'BRIEN: What was the response of the Liberals and the Nationalists to the Alliance throughout the time you were there? The Liberals probably supported it.

BURROWS: They supported it. The Nationalists weren't at all sure.... The Nationalists thought of it more in terms of what *they* were getting from the United States, I guess. The Liberals did, too, but I think the Nationalists thought more in those terms. They didn't understand it entirely; they couldn't get

the idea of it being a multilateral thing. I must admit that the government did a better job trying to put that point across than you might have expected of it—Villeda Morales did. He didn't think of it as a bilateral program. Of course, he tried to use it for his agrarian reform proposal. That was part of Honduras' participation in the Alliance for Progress, what they were obligated to do, what they wanted to do.

When the *golpe* came, we began pulling out, and it became very clear that we were stopping everything—that is, as far as aid was concerned—the Nationalists said, and they were right, that aid would return in six months. I wouldn't admit it to them at the time.

The very night of the *golpe* there was a party at the embassy—as a matter of fact, President Villeda Morales was there. I knew this thing was coming very soon. I was hoping it wouldn't be that night because we had planned this social event long in advance, this party for the French ambassador. (He had been there for long years.) Anyway, I got a phone call in the middle of our dinner party. (Very fancy, the only really fancy dinner party we did in Tegucigalpa—on the terrace, a beautiful thing.) I went to the phone and here was the consul in San Pedro calling...

O'BRIEN: That was Ashford [Robert S. Ashford].

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BURROWS: Ashford. He said, "The troops are moving. It's on the way, I think. I'm positive that it is." So I went back and tapped the President on the elbow and said, "I have something I want to talk to you about." And we went out, and I told him. Well, he gave no indication to the group that anything was going on. Of course, all the Nationalists—everyone was buzzing, "What's going on? What's going on?" It kind of broke the party up and in a short time. And of course, all the chatter—they knew, the Nationalists knew, that the *golpe* was on the way, so they were talking about it. One or two of them talked to me about it. I said, "Well, I don't know, you may be biting something off that you'd rather not have because no one can know what's going to happen. We may suspend relations. I don't know what'll happen. It's quite possible that aid is going to be stopped." "Oh, well, don't worry about that. You'll be back, you'll be back in six months. You'll be back in two months. Six weeks. You'll be back in six weeks; you'll be here."

Of course, they had seen it happen before. They'd seen it happen in Peru—or threatened. They'd seen it in Guatemala; nothing happened in Guatemala. And we were back, of course. And nothing much was accomplished, I think, by our being absent from Honduras for those three months, really.

O'BRIEN: Well, what's at the roots of the coup?

BURROWS: Well, the root of the coup was definitely that Modesto Alvarado, the Liberal party candidate, was going to win the election. It was clear that he was going to win. There was a very weak Nationalist candidate. That's the basic reason. The military wanted to stop Modesto from becoming president.

He had made some very foolish mistakes. He had campaigned on what sounded like a very extreme program. He had made such statements out in the country. When he became president, the door would be open to the Nationalists—the door out of the country would be open to them. He talked about such things as stringing up military men to trees. He didn't come back to Tegucigalpa very often.

I got him twice when he came back on trips and had long talks with him. I'd say, "What in the world are you trying to do? This sounds awful, the way you're talking—if you're going to be doing this when you're president." "Oh," he said, "that's campaign talk. People like to hear those things." I said, "You're making a mistake."

At the same time, Colonel Oswaldo Lopez, who was then chief

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of the armed forces, was talking to me as he had always talked ever since the day I got there. He wanted to talk to me. He'd come to the residence for hours of conversation. Every three or four weeks he'd say, "Let's get together; I want to talk." He'd come to the residence, and he and I would talk, sit there talking, til 3 o'clock in the morning and drinking, drinking himself sort of silly, but talking, talking, talking. And he was always talking about his trouble holding back his men. They felt they had to take over the government, he said, because the Liberals were not their friends. And I knew that he was weakening; he had told me that he couldn't hold on much longer. They were going to have to move to stop Modesto Alvarado from becoming president.

O'BRIEN: Is there any pressure on the part of conservative landowners, for example, that might be reacting to the agrarian reform laws?

BURROWS: I don't think that was the motive. As far as the Nationalists were concerned, they wanted to be in power, yes; they didn't want the Liberals to win. And they liked the military, they always had. The military, they felt, was with them, as it always had been. They were pleased to see it being done, but not, I think, to protect themselves against agrarian reform. I don't really think they were that worried about the agrarian reform law.

Of course, they didn't like the Liberal party government. They felt that they could do things a lot better, and they professed to think the Liberals were all communists, and I think maybe they believed it. And they felt that they could do better—but essentially they wanted to be back in office. That's the main thing, as far as they were concerned.

O'BRIEN: Well, you mentioned that you were aware that the coup was coming, but you didn't know precisely when. How did you become aware of that?

BURROWS: From Lopez.

O'BRIEN: Did Lopez—he told you that?

BURROWS: He told me. But I kept telling him, “Look, don’t be foolish. Don’t be crazy.” Up until that time he always—we would usually end up our conversation and I’d feel I’d gotten someplace with him, and nothing had happened. But this time I felt pretty sure he wasn’t going to stick around and wait for that election to take place. I tried to warn the President as directly as I felt I could. I couldn’t go to him and say, “Look, your chief of armed forces is being a traitor

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here.” I’d go around and say to him, “I think you better talk to Lopez. I don’t like the looks of things. I think you’re going to have a problem here.” And he would say, “No, no, don’t worry about Lopez, he’ll never pull a *golpe* on me. We understand each other.”

O’BRIEN: When did Lopez first start talking coup—*golpe*—to you?

BURROWS: Seriously? Because always, from the time I got there, he talked about his—he always had to hold his men back.

O’BRIMT: Okay, then seriously.

BURROWS: Oh, the last month before it actually happened, I suppose.

O’BRIEN: Now, did you communicate this to anyone else, like the department?

BURROWS: Oh, yes, to be sure. Sure, the department was informed of the possibility.

O’BRIEN: Now how about other intelligence gathering, namely CIA? Were they involved at all in...

BURROWS: Yes, we always consult closely with...

O’BRIEN: In Washington?

BURROWS: I’m sure in Washington also. But in Honduras, the chief of the CIA and I would consult on things like this very closely. Of course, we couldn’t be sure that this was going to happen. We knew how Lopez was talking, you see, and how the military was talking, but we couldn’t be sure he would do it, they would do it. But although perhaps I was surprised; I wasn’t astonished when it happened.

Actually, Villeda Morales’ hands were tied anyway. He couldn’t have done much about it, you see. He could have talked more to Lopez, but when the time came, he couldn’t get a hold of Lopez during the last few days. He couldn’t get him. He was unavailable. I couldn’t reach Lopez either the last two days. He just wasn’t there. I couldn’t find him. He was off someplace.

Actually, the day before the *golpe* happened, two days

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before, I had a phone call from Washington: would I object if a good friend of Lopez would come from Panama to talk to him? I hadn't really met him, but I knew it was General Bogart—he was the army chief in Panama at the time. I said, "No." I didn't mind sharing responsibility on this one. I knew it was going to happen sometime soon. And Bogart came; he came and talked to Lopez. And Lopez in effect told him, "No, it's too late." It happened that night, actually, that very night.

So people knew about it and the President wouldn't admit it, but I'm sure he must have thought so. But yet, when it actually happened, he acted really surprised and hurt to the quick that Lopez would do this to him.

Lopez was available to General Bogart when he came, but Bogart got no place. I didn't think he would, but I was happy for him to try.

O'BRIEN:                Were you in on the meeting?

BURROWS:              No, I didn't want to be, really. This was supposed to be handled as quietly as possible. Of course, a lot of people knew afterwards that he had been there. Afterwards, it was stated that the General had come to give Lopez the green light. And that became the story in Honduras: that the U. S. Army—not the State Department, but the Pentagon—had approved of the *golpe*. And the evidence was that the Army sent their general from Panama to tell Lopez, "Okay, go ahead." The opposition always tried—for political reasons, they always tried to pretend that the Department of State and the Pentagon were on conflicting courses, you see.

O'BRIEN:              But the department was definitely concerned about it after you informed them, in instructing you to try to...

BURROWS:              Absolutely. There was no instruction necessary. I was doing my best to stop it, but....

O'BRIEN:              Well, you know, you mentioned these charges. I think *The New Republic* carried the charge that while you were trying at one end to discourage the coup that some of your military people and MAAG [Military Assistance Advisory Group] encouraged them to go ahead. Did you ever see any evidence that that was so?

BURROWS:              No, I never did. After the thing happened and relations were suspended, there was a lot of unhappiness on the part of the MAAG people—I don't know what they thought

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they could do about it, but they were very unhappy. They were protesting the instructions to leave and to break things off and so on. But I never saw any evidence of the kind of thing *The New Republic* was talking about.

O'BRIEN: Well, who were you in communication with at this point in the Department and in the White House?

BURROWS: I had no direct communication with the White House, but I was on the phone very frequently and by cable all the time with the Department, Ed Martin, I suppose; certainly the director of the office. There was no direct White House contact—never was, as a matter of fact.

O'BRIEN: Were events in the Dominican Republic kind of an inspiration for this?

BURROWS: Oh, I don't know. Could have been, I suppose. I think it would have happened regardless, because Lopez wanted to run for president. He wanted to be president, no question about that. And back in the spring of that year the Nationalists were trying to nominate him, trying to convince him that he should be nominated to run for President. He thought about it very seriously, and he talked to me about it. What did I think about it? And I thought it was a very bad idea, frankly. I didn't tell him outright. I asked a lot of questions. I asked, "Do you think you can win? Do you think you can campaign successfully?" Because he would have been a very bad campaigner.

And what I foresaw was that if he entered the race, he would either win by fraud or he would lose, and then there would be a *golpe*. I couldn't see him or the army permitting him to lose gracefully. And he could never have won an honest election. And that's how I feared a *golpe* might come at that time. That he would try an election and lose, and the army would take over.

So by questions—I kept asking him "Do you think you could handle it?" Did he think that economic, political and international problems were the kinds that he would like to get into? Did he really think he could win the election? What would he do if he lost the election? Would he lose it gracefully and quietly? "Oh," he said, "it would be enough honor to have run for election, just to be a candidate."

Well, a lot of people talked to him, of course, and he finally decided not to do it. And I, at the moment, thought we'd gotten over a hurdle, you know, he wasn't going to try this, be unsuccessful and mount a *golpe*. But then came this

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unrestrained Liberal Party nominee with his extreme campaigning, and that's when Lopez and the army decided that they just couldn't stand by and see the man elected. And they thought it would be better to pull a *golpe* before the election, rather than watch him be elected and then two weeks later pull it—as had been done in the Dominican Republic.

[BEGIN SIDE 1 TAPE 2]

...the attitude that we took and the stance we adopted. But I do not—nor were the AID people. They were just as unhappy about it, too. They saw their program going down the drain, a program they'd worked years on it. All that reflects, I think, is unhappiness with what we did, and not encouragement to the Hondurans for what *they* did.

O'BRIEN: Well, we've been talking here of—we're talking about Colonel Lopez or...

BURROWS: That was then-Colonel Lopez.

O'BRIEN: There's then General Lopez as well?

BURROWS: They're the same man. Lopez became general when he was elected president.

O'BRIEN: Ahh! But there's a difference in spelling of names, too, isn't there?

BURROWS: No. It's Oswaldo Lopez. The first act of the congress when it assembled was to name him general.

O'BRIEN: What kind of a person is he?

BURROWS: I always liked him. He's personable. He's clever. He's not highly educated, but he's intelligent. He and I could talk to each other, understand each other. He was, to me, an appealing sort of character. I don't think I would have liked to have a serious argument with him and then have to walk down a dark alley. He's short, slight, dark, has a little mustache. Out of uniform, he looks fairly insignificant.

He always held himself apart from the other government members, although he was part of the government, he was the chief of armed forces. He had practically cabinet rank. Whenever the President received publicly in the palace on any occasions, the cabinet would come in. Lopez would come in uniform always just a little bit apart, somehow. But he was

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the figure that commanded attention when he came in, rather than any of the cabinet, really. He had an erect bearing, a smart figure and he was a very proud young man. He could get very earthy, use very strong language, and he had a basically good sense of humor. He had the kind of humor that permitted him to laugh at himself.

Right after the *golpe* happened—early in the morning—there was nobody on the switchboard at the embassy, nobody that knew how to handle it, anyway, and calls were coming in from everywhere. I got a call from some newspaper man in Florida, who asked the same question you asked, “What about this fellow Lopez? What kind of a guy is he?” Well, I still didn't feel like—despite what had happened, I wasn't prepared at that point to be on the record as saying, “What a horrible character this guy is.” In the first place, I knew we were



going to be having relations with him some day. And I knew he'd be around. He wasn't going to disappear. So I said, "Well, I think we can do business with him. I can talk to him. He's not a bad fellow." *Well*, I got a call very quickly from a friend in the department, asking me about this and saying, "My God, Chuck, be careful what you say down there."

O'BRIEN: Who was that if I may ask?

BURROWS: Lansing Collins called. He was director of the office. I tried to avoid those calls from then on.

O'BRIEN: Well, how about President Villeda Morales? Did he come to you and ask for any kind of assistance during this coup?

BURROWS: Yes. When he left the party at the residence. I went right to the office. He went to the palace. He called me almost immediately. I was trying to find out more. I sent people out to the first battalion, another couple of places there in the city to see what was going on, whether there was any movement. Military attaché, army attaché, and air attaché. They came back and said it was all quiet, not a sign of anything, all quiet in Tegucigalpa.

The President had tried to get in touch with Lopez—couldn't get him. He tried to call several people; he couldn't get anybody. But everything was quiet, apparently. So he called me and said, "What have you learned?" I said, "Not very much, Mr. President. All I know is that I talked to San Pedro Sula, and the Consul there confirms that something's going on," "Well," he said, "I don't think so. I don't think anything's going to happen—not tonight, anyway, I think I'll go to bed." So I went to bed too, after a few minutes; I went back to the

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residence, went to bed. I had no more than gotten in bed, turned the lights off, then the phone rang.

We had at that time—after the missile crisis, President Kennedy had been very upset because he discovered there were no really secure and quick means of communication with many of these places. You know, in Tegucigalpa the international telephone system closes down at 9 p.m. We couldn't telephone after 9:00 p.m. until the next morning at 6:00 a.m., on the public telephone. Of course, we had other facilities that we could have used, but we couldn't have used them, normally, except in the most extreme of circumstances. But it was after that that the fancy telephone communications were installed by the military—through Panama. We got the hot line. We put one telephone in the President's office and one in his home (upstairs in the Palace); one phone in the Foreign Minister's office and one in his home and one in the Embassy residence and one in the office.

And on that line we could communicate directly with anybody we wanted to in the States, you see. I could have come in and called the President just like that. I never did. You see, the only time I would have had occasion would have been during this *golpe*, but I did not consider it necessary. I went through the Department of State. I guess I was too career-minded to think it was ever necessary, anyway, really, to do it.

I could talk to President [Villeda Morale] on that phone, too, when he would call. We had never used it, but that night he found how useful it was because the switchboard was cut. That was cut very quickly and there wasn't any public telephone. So we were talking to each other on the special line, and I was calling Washington on that line, too.

Anyway, I had no more than gotten in bed than this phone rang, this special phone rang, and I answered it, and it was Mrs. Villeda Morales. She was crying. And she said, "The President just got a..." [Interruption] She was crying. She said, "Colonel Lopez just called my husband and told him that it's all over; that he has to get out. They're on the way to the palace." And I made suitable offerings of commiseration and got up and went back to the office. By that time, the planes were flying, and there was some shooting.

And then Villeda called me over and over again. I learned afterwards that he was talking widely on that phone. He was calling people in the United States on that line—anybody he could think of he would call.

O'BRIEN: Oh, is that right?

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BURROWS: Of course, it wasn't supposed to be used that way, but there was nothing to stop him, unless some operator along the line said, "Sir, we can't put this call through," and they weren't about to do that. But things went on, and then he was finally told by Lopez that he had a choice of either leading the country right then—he and his family—or going into an embassy, taking asylum. But before that, when things were already desperate, he said he was asking for help from the United States. And I said, "Mr. President, what can be done? What do you think can be done?" Well, he didn't know, but "send some troops." I don't think we would have, anyway, but I don't think we should or could have at that point.

I was asked by the correspondents, afterwards, about that, too; hadn't I tried to get some troops down there to help? And then one of them said, "Why didn't you have some ships off the coast down here to stop this?" That was a *Washington Star* man—Dan Kurzman. He was very extreme, really. Anyway, there would not have been a chance at that point. But that was the only time he ever asked for any help.

O'BRIEN: Well, the Ambassador in Washington Davila [Celeo Davila] tried, apparently, too, to get in touch with the department to get some aid, didn't he?

BURROWS: Yes, probably did. I'm sure Villeda called him and talked to him.

O'BRIEN: Did the generals ever try to—or were they ever in contact with United Fruit, to your knowledge?

BURROWS: Do you mean at that time, during that period?

O'BRIEN: Well, prior to the coup.

BURROWS: Do you mean to get the company blessing or their help or....

O'BRIEN: Right, to your knowledge, did you ever see any evidence to that effect?

BURROWS: No, I never did. I had close enough relations with United Fruit so that I'm sure they would have told me about it. I'm sure they would have been scared stiff if anybody.... You see, this sounds like some reporter writing about the days of the 1920's. And Henry [O. Henry]—the author who placed so many of his stories in Honduras, fanciful stories he told about the banana republic and the revolutions United Fruit Company inspired and how governments were overrun and changed by the Company.

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O'BRIEN: Well, how did the General respond to things like Secretary Rusk's condemnation of the coup, as well as the closing of the AID mission?

BURROWS: Well, I wasn't there, you see.

O'BRIEN: You were pulled back by then.

BURROWS: I was pulled back. I never saw the General after that until I went back officially.

O'BRIEN: Did you have any other problems during the coup of safety, let's say, safety of U.S. citizens or anything like that?

BURROWS: No, although we had some visiting citizens there who were pretty scared. The first day we collected them together. We knew they were worried because the hotels, the two hotels were somewhat in the line of fire. We collected them all together at the embassy office, and they spent the night with different embassy families. Got them all off the next day, all those who wanted to go. No problem. We put flags on the cars and sent them to the hotels to pick the Americans up. There wasn't any problem at all.

O'BRIEN: You had other agencies there that are involved in foreign policy, like the MAAG groups and, of course, AID and the CIA. Did you ever have any problems with any of these agencies in coordination of....

BURROWS: No.

O'BRIEN: Anything that you remember in particular about the functioning...

BURROWS: The only problems I had were *ex post facto*, after this had happened,

and the instructions were to get out. There was a great deal of unhappiness then. And then there was some effort, I think, to take some public positions and, perhaps, encourage some of these reporters to write some of the stories they did, but that was unhappiness with what we had done as a result of the coup. I never felt that I had any problem with maintaining coordination. We had a fairly happy household, I think.

O'BRIEN: Did you put the country team idea into effect when you went there as ambassador?

BURROWS: Yes. I'd started that sort of thing in Manila when I was there years before. It wasn't country team

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then. But then I was chargé on one occasion I started it. There had really not been any communication with the military by the former ambassador, and I felt that was very bad. So before the next ambassador got there, I had something going with the military. Certainly, in Caracas we had it, and then certainly in Honduras we always had pretty good communications.

O'BRIEN: How about the civic action program there? Can you evaluate its effectiveness?

BURROWS: Oh, I don't know. It was done not terribly effectively as far as results were concerned, I suppose, but the U.S. military was anxious to do it. The Honduran military, certainly Lopez, recognized the importance of it from his own point of view, acceptance of the military by the people. So civic action became almost more a political arm.... The effectiveness was more in that direction, I think. Oh, they build some roads, a few roads, yes, but those roads didn't go anywhere. We had a civic action officer in the mission, the military mission. They were doing little things. Well, as I say, I think the main results were to increase the acceptance of the military, which may have been good or may have been bad, I don't know.

O'BRIEN: How about the civil guard in these—the civil guard becomes more increasingly identified with the Liberals, doesn't it, and less with the military? Now, are they working in the civil action thing as well?

BURROWS: Up to a point, yes, but it's quite different now, of course, they don't have a civil guard. Villeda Morales had the *guardia civil* after 1959. He became president in 1957. In 1959, in July, July 12, there was an attempted *golpe* against him by the national police, the then national police, which was part of the army. The only support Villeda Morales had then was the penitentiary guard and his own palace guard. The army under Lopez stayed outside the city. Their barracks were ten

miles from the city. They didn't move until they saw that the *golpe* had failed, and then they moved in to sort of quiet things down.

I asked Lopez afterwards, "Why didn't you move in? You were, after all, part of the government. Why weren't you there defending the President?" He said, "I was maintaining myself outside to move in whatever direction was necessary." He said, "If I had moved my troops in, I know what would have happened. I know my men. You don't know my men. They understand orders, and they'll follow orders, but they are not very flexible. If I had sent my men in, they would have shot, they would have shot

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at anything moving along the streets. There would have been a lot more deaths than there were." He may have been right. He may have been right because when they were let loose in the 1963 *golpe*, they shot pretty freely all around. They're not able to distinguish much between.... If they go out on a mission, by God, they're going to shoot. Anyway, he didn't move in 1959 so that when that coup was overcome, a *guardia civil* was formed under the ministry of interior and not under the army at all.

That was something I didn't mention before. That was another reason that was given for the coup in 1963—or at least, it was an excuse that was used. The army said that the *guardia civil* was getting ready to take over, and that it was going to be the army under the new president, and the army would have been phased out, with the *guardia civil* becoming the armed force. And they even said there was a present threat from the *guardia civil*.

Well, I was sure there wasn't. We had never sent arms to the *guardia civil*. Early in the game we sent them five hundred M-1's, which were to be used largely on the frontiers and in outlying districts. They weren't; they were kept in Tegucigalpa, really, most of them, so we never gave them anymore. And they kept requesting more arms; they said they had to have arms. But we said, "We'll send you what we consider proper police weapons, billy clubs and revolvers and that kind of thing, but we don't think you need other arms." So they didn't get them. So when the coup came, they were no match at all for the army. They were slaughtered; in half an hour or hour they were finished. But anyway, that was another excuse for the army moving when they did: to take care of the *guardia civil*.

I can understand why Villeda Morales formed the *guardia civil* after he found he couldn't depend on the army or the national police to defend the government; you see, the national police were part of the army and not directly under the President. So then he formed the other body, which was not in the army, and, of course, the jealousy grew.

Now, since the coup—they don't call them the *guardia civil*; whatever they call them, I've forgotten—they're army, really, but it's another branch of the army, and they sort of transferred from the regular army to that police branch. They don't particularly like that duty, you know. They don't get the best people for the police duty, They don't like to be assigned to that; they'd rather be in the regular army, the officers. So again; there are two little separate forces, in a way, but they're both army.

O'BRIEN: Did you ever have any problems with Peace Corps

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operations that come to mind?

BURROWS: No, never did.

O'BRIEN: Any conflicts with...

BURROWS: Not when I was there. And I don't know if they have had any at any time. There may have been later in Honduras, but I didn't have any.

O'BRIEN: Did the CIA have any operations activities going on in the country outside of the normal intelligence gathering?

BURROWS: Not really any big operations, no. They talked about several things, but nothing ever came off. They never really did anything in the way of an operation there.

O'BRIEN: Were they involved at all in ties with youth groups or perhaps supporting the Liberal party?

BURROWS: Yes. They were at one time active with the student party leaders, certain ones. Again, I think they pulled back a little bit when it became so rationally political, because it did become a matter of Liberal versus Nationalist party, eventually. They went in originally, of course, on the communist issues, to dissuade the students from the communist groups, which were in the university. I had some contact also with students who were on both ideological sides. Actually, we were quite successful in that. It became quite a struggle every year—the CIA was active on this—to try to see that the communist group did not achieve control of the student federation. And then, after the coup, some of those student federation leaders turned out to be supported by the Nationalists as part of the national political struggle. Although before the coup, the Nationalists were claiming that this was all Liberal party imagination. It's a very political country.

O'BRIEN: Well, we really haven't said much about things regarding the economic integration of Central America, the Latin America Free Trade Association, and things of this sort. Do you have any...

BURROWS: Well, integration was going very well, I think, really, until the last year or so when political problems developed. Trade within the area increased at least fivefold, maybe more than fivefold by the end of last year. There were problems because government revenues in each

case were very directly affected by the lesser amounts of duties collected on imported goods by one Central American country from another, and not enough action was taken in terms of taxation, income tax and otherwise, to increase government revenue so the governments could do the kinds of things that had to be done for developmental purposes. But we were getting someplace on that and a lot was being done.

Now, with this latest conflict between Honduras and Salvador, I think a very serious blow has been struck against the Common Market. I think there are just too many interests involved for it not to get straightened out, but what will have to be overcome is the emotional feeling between those two countries, which is turning very high. And the two governments have not helped to restrain those feelings. Quite to the contrary, I think both of them have encouraged those strong feelings, emotional feelings, so that so far they are not getting back on a constructive course very quickly. But integration and the Common Market have progressed a great deal. And even those people who, early in the game, had said, "Oh, this is awful; we can't do this; it's impossible"—commercial interests—by this time have said to us, "We can't give it up. We've got to work with it. We're into it now. We can't possibly give it up."

Many of the large commercial interests in Honduras are controlled by Turcos, they call them. They're Arabs, really, in most cases, Middle Eastern people. They were the big commercial interests. They were opposed to the Common Market, but they're smart people, and they had money—other Hondurans had real estate and land, but not money, necessarily—so the Arabs went into industry when they saw what was happening. And now they have factories and export to neighboring countries. They are now the ones that would be most strongly in favor of the Common Market. It's those people plus others, who are so directly involved in the Common Market that they can't really afford to see it go down the drain. And I think there are just enough interests of that kind, there are enough international bodies involved; our own Department of State, the Inter-American Bank, really, far too many interests involved in this thing for it to just disappear.

O'BRIEN: So where is the major resistance to it in Honduras, when you were were, in what sectors?

BURROWS: Commercial sectors.

O'BRIEN: Basically, the commercial sectors.

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BURROWS: The export-import people and the governments themselves, you see, to a certain extent. They saw this as a loss of revenue, and they weren't quite sure they could handle the situation. But the economists, the people who'd thought seriously about this, saw the tremendous opportunities, and they saw they couldn't live otherwise. I mean, five little countries like that, how could they develop, each one with a population of two or three million people? They couldn't do anything. With twelve or fourteen or fifteen million people maybe they could do something; at least they could do more than five small entities could do separately.

O'BRIEN: Well, while you were there, do you ever have—getting to your relations with the Department for a moment—anything in the way of decisions that are made or policies which are formulated, any time which you feel that you're in disagreement with what the Department does in regard to Honduras?

BURROWS: Oh, yes, sure we had. Largely with aid matters, I think, more than in any other field. And we battled and argued back and forth; but then when the decision was made, there weren't any problems in buckling down and carrying out what we considered to be the policy, the decision. We had plenty of opportunity to express our opinions back and forth before the decision was made, and often, certainly on the AID side, we would travel to Washington and argue further. But if you lose the argument—you carry it so far—once the decision is made, nobody ever tried to sabotage any action that was forthcoming.

O'BRIEN: What are some of the major instances of these disagreements, do you recall any?

BURROWS: The ones I'm thinking about are housing projects, AID projects, that sort of thing. Housing projects were always very hard to get through and approved at this end. And we felt that there was a great place for that kind of thing in Honduras. They were very low-cost housing projects, and always at this end they would get loaded with all kinds of extras for Honduras, but "extras" that we very much required in this country. But there, anything beyond a dirt floor was a tremendous improvement, and the people could have been given something that showed. It would have been unacceptable here but still, there, would look like a wonderful house. Why not let them have it, you see? But that was a great area of disagreement. We never could get that across. We always had to add on these aluminum spouts and copper fitting, and make sure that the ceiling was regulation height and many other things that we felt were unimportant and just added to

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the cost, made it just that much more difficult for the prospective owner of the house to be able to handle or to buy. That's the kind of thing where we had the argument.

Otherwise, I don't think that there was any major issue where I felt I had to go to bat. Usually, I felt that the Department agreed with what I thought ought to be done and vice versa. We never had any really major conflicts. Sometimes I felt that I was being pressed too hard on certain things, and I could feel that I was maybe going beyond where I should have gone. Although I must say that often I found I was saying that sort of thing more than perhaps the Department expected, after I went back to Honduras.

It was not an easy period for me to go back to a country from which I had been withdrawn for three months. I was looked upon with great suspicion by the Nationalists, who'd all been my personal friends, but after all, I had been accredited to the Liberal party



president. And when I went back they were not happy to see me, nor was the government, except for Lopez. He told me afterwards that he'd been advised by many of his people not to take me back. Some of the Americans didn't think I should be back there. They assumed I couldn't possibly do business with that government. I knew I could with Lopez, and I knew that if I could with Lopez, I very soon could with the rest of them, too. And it worked out that way. And Lopez at the time said, "No, no. I told my people that—no problem." He said, "After all, you and I understand each other: we're both career people." [Laughter]

After congress was elected.... Well, we never had any thought that anybody but Lopez would be selected to be president. Of course Lopez was selected. He was selected by the congress. It was a congressional election. The congress was elected, and the congress named the President, that's the way it worked at that time. The Nationalists won the congressional election, not by a lot, but they had maybe thirty-five out of sixty-five *deputatos* and the Liberals had thirty. But the Liberals said, "We should have won. We were cheated on this election."

And it's true that in many places they were, and we knew it. But unfortunately for the Liberals, the one place where they assumed they would win, the one place which Villeda Morales told the reporters, the correspondents that were down there they would win, was Tegucigalpa. He said, "You watch, watch closely. If the election were as free all around the country as it will have to be here in Tegucigalpa, you'll see that we that we would in the country just like we're going to win Tegucigalpa." But they lost Tegucigalpa, and it was obviously free in Tegucigalpa, and nothing was done to stop anybody from voting, but the Liberals just didn't their

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get people out in Tegucigalpa. And they lost the election there. So their argument that they should have won fell sort of flat.

But anyway, the Liberals came to the congress. The first thing that was done was to name Lopez a general. The Liberals at first weren't going to take their seats at all. That was the first thing. They said no Liberal would take his seat. Well, as Ambassador—you do a lot of things in Honduras that you might not do in other countries. But I was very much into that thing. I was calling Lopez or Ricardo Zuniga—he was number two man—and then talking to the Liberal party people, trying to get the Liberal party to take their seats, and telling them, "What do you expect to accomplish by not taking your seats? You've got a very healthy and respectable delegation here. You can get something through once in awhile. You'll be able to stop some actions, probably. You'll get some Nationalists occasionally to vote with you. What are you going to do otherwise? Go into the hills and fight?" Well, they might just do that, they said. And some of them *wanted* to go in the hills and start fighting.

I thought it was very necessary to get them to take their seats. And there, I suppose, I was intervening, very clearly intervening, because I was on the phone, I was moving around, they were coming to my office, and I would talk first to one side and then the other side. You know, from one half hour to the other, they would switch back and forth, they'd change their minds. You ask if I were pressed. There, I was doing more pressing—the Department was very satisfied that I was doing this, but I wasn't being pressed too much by the Department. I

was pressing there. But we were really in rapport, there were never any great divisions on what should be done in Honduras.

O'BRIEN: Did you have a pretty good desk officer?

BURROWS: Yeah.

O'BRIEN: Who was that?

BURROWS: Well, the first one was Max Chaplin [Maxwell Chaplin], who now is in Mexican Affairs in the department, and then Ed Rowell [Edward M. Rowell]. They were both excellent, really, very active, and we understood, always, each other very well. And they were very effective at this end. Also, the office directors were very good.

O'BRIEN: How was Ed Martin as assistant secretary?

BURROWS: He was very good, very good, a good assistant secretary.

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He knew what was going on all the time, made decisions, quick ones, good ones, as far as I know. I liked him.

O'BRIEN: You got good cooperation out of him...

BURROWS: Yes.

O'BRIEN: ...on things that involved him?

BURROWS: Yes.

O'BRIEN: How about your AID director Carson Crocker?

BURROWS: I liked him. He's a diamond in the rough kind of fellow, you know, and he wouldn't have worked everywhere. He was a very frank fellow, an intelligent, hard worker and his Spanish was completely bilingual. He was born in Colombia, I guess—or Uruguay. Colloquial Spanish. He could talk as rough language as any of the army guys or other people he had to deal with, and they got along well. They wouldn't have taken it from somebody else, but from him, they could take it, and he could be very frank with them. He was intelligent. He was very vigorous. He pushed hard enough, as I say, that someplace else they wouldn't have taken it, but there, they took it and followed his leads. I liked him.

O'BRIEN: Who was the head of your CIA operation there, do you recall?



BURROWS: Very good.

O'BRIEN: How about the Peace Corps?

BURROWS: We had good Peace Corps representatives, also, while I was there—I don't know what's happened since. We had a fellow named Ed Astle [Edwin P. Astle] there first. He's back there with AID now in Honduras. He was very good. He was out in the field with his people most of the time and otherwise, he was very close to Mrs. Villeda Morales and later on with the new government. He did very well. I think we had good people, and we had no real problem. I had one or two volunteers that had problems, but nothing important.

O'BIREN: Well, as a kind of overall question and one that, in

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a sense, I'd like you to think about for a moment.... You went through the changes of two administrations, here, from the Eisenhower Administration to the Kennedy Administration, from the Kennedy Administration to the Johnson Administration [Lyndon Baines Johnson]. Do you see any fundamental shifts either in policy towards Honduras or Central America or Latin America as a whole in those administrations, any differences that you noticed?

BURROWS: Well, of emphasis, I suppose, but basically no real change in policy. I think under Eisenhower we were starting things that got dramatized and pushed forward much harder under Kennedy. I think we lost a great deal of emphasis and impetus with Kennedy's death. I think, always, we were going in the same direction and basically with the same principles and endeavors and goals. I think it's in terms of tone more than anything else. I think under Kennedy it was a different tone. It might not have lasted, I don't know. How Kennedy would have shown up later on, as far as our relations, his status, his image in Latin America and around the world are concerned, I don't know. But until the time of his death, people felt there was a very different kind of tone involved—you know, they were excited, and they were doing things. There may have been a more business-like operation, I suppose—or attempt at it, before and after Kennedy—but with him the heart was present and the spirit was high.

O'BRIEN: Well, from your notes and just reflections during this interview, is there anything we've perhaps left out that...

BURROWS: I don't think so.

O'BRIEN: ...you think that we should....

BURROWS: You know, I was here in Washington when Kennedy was killed. I was up on this suspension of relations, and I wasn't in Honduras. And by mid-November, which was just a little over a month after I got here, we were pretty much, as far as the White House was concerned, ready to resume relations. But then his death stopped everything, of course, for another month.

O'BRIEN: Is that the influence of people like Mann [Thomas Clifton Mann]? Was there a shift in philosophy here towards the military in Latin America?

BURROWS: Mann wasn't here, then. He wasn't assistant secretary. Ed Martin was still assistant secretary.

O'BRIEN: He was still in Mexico then, wasn't he?

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BURROWS: Yes. He came up before I went back to—no, he wasn't here when I went back. When he came to Washington, we had a meeting of ambassadors here about March of 1964. I had returned to Honduras in January. And in March, we had a meeting of ambassadors, and Mann was here then.

I think Martin was anxious to get relations reestablished. And the White House was ready to do it. I don't think Moscoso was happy about it. He wanted to apply what he would have called screws, but they weren't very effective screws. Well, anyway, by mid November we were ready to resume, but then came that assassination, and things didn't get back on the rails again until the middle of December.

When the assassination occurred, we were without formal relations, had no ambassador, anyway, in Honduras. But the outpouring of grief and reaction there was just as tremendous as any other place. People poured to that embassy and signed their names, people off the streets, everybody. I mean any hint of ill-feeling was not present at that moment, as far as President Kennedy was concerned. I doubt that anybody ever blamed any of their ill feeling on President Kennedy, but on somebody else. Just like the difference in some people's minds between the Pentagon and the State Department.

O'BRIEN: Well, thank you Ambassador Burrows for an excellent and very reflective interview.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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