

Teodoro Moscoso Oral History Interview – JFK#1, 5/18/1964
Administrative Information

Creator: Teodoro Moscoso

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Biographical Note

Moscoso, Teodoro; Ambassador to Venezuela (1961), United States Coordinator, Alliance for Progress, Agency for International Development (1961-1964). This interview focuses on Moscoso's time as Ambassador to Venezuela, the inception of the Alliance for Progress program, and John F. Kennedy's trip to Venezuela and Colombia, among other issues.

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Oral History Interview

with

T
THEODORO MOSCOSO

May 18, 1964 2:20 P.M. *e*

By Leigh Miller

For the John F. Kennedy Library

~~MILLER,
INTERVIEWER.~~

Mr. Moscoso, when was the first time that you had ever met President Kennedy?

MOSCOSO:

I met President Kennedy in person for the first time during a visit he made to Governor Muñoz ^{*e*}
[Luis Muñoz Marín] Marín in Puerto Rico early in 1960. I remember that the evening of the afternoon that we met at the Governor's Mansion there was a dinner given for him by the local Democratic party and, in view of the fact, ^{*e*} that Governor Muñoz felt it improper for commonwealth officials to become identified with national elections and much less with candidates for national elections, or possible candidates, he requested ^{*e*} that his

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cabinet members ^{to} abstain from attending the dinner. In any event, at that time, emotionally and intellectually, I was attracted by Mr. Stevenson ^[Adlai E. Stevenson] so the Governor's orders did not impose too great a strain on me at the time. I must say, however, that in later months I told the Governor that, much as I would like to obey his directive, I thought that ^{if} if one had a deep commitment in favor of a particular party, one should try to assist it in every possible way and that I did ^{so} when President Kennedy became the candidate for the Democratic party. I chaired the committee that helped in the fund-gathering campaign in Puerto Rico.

MILLER: This was the only contact with President Kennedy that you had before the election?

MOSCOSO: The only personal contact. Before that, I remember receiving some rather strong letters that Senator Kennedy had addressed to Governor Muñoz ^{Marín} with regards to the Industrial and Developmental Program of Puerto Rico. I understand that some of these letters were requested by the unions in New England.

and I remember having to spend quite a number of nights in my office working on the answers.

MILLER: These strong letters were in opposition to concessions given?

MOSCOSO: In opposition to concessions and arguing that some of them were not exactly fair. We took the line that in the state of Puerto Rican economic development at that time we had to use all of the inducements and incentives available to us by law.

I have a sneaking suspicion that some of those letters were originally drafted by Ralph Dungan [Ralph A. Dungan] whom I later got to meet.

MILLER: What were the dates of those particular letters? Do you recall?

MOSCOSO: They were written over a period of a number of years. I believe the first one was around '57 or '58.

MILLER: And there were several of them ⁱⁿ to your recollection?

MOSCOSO: Yes, there were a number of letters.

MILLER: Thereafter, the election occurred in the fall of 1960 and during the period of early '61, did you have any contact with the president in any way?

MOSCOSO: No, the first contact I received from the Federal Government came via the State Department, ^{when} they asked me to come from New York to Washington for

a brief interview.

MILLER: What was the approximate date of that, do you recall?

MOSCOSO: That was around the beginning of March, in 1961.

MILLER: In 1961?
MOSCOSO: Yes. In 1961.

MILLER: And you did come?

MOSCOSO: I did come to Washington and I was astonished to hear that I was being considered for the post of United States ambassador ⁱⁿ to Venezuela. I suppose that the only reason that put my name in ^{somebody's} ~~front of~~ ^{mind} ~~someone else's~~ was perhaps the fact that I was an old friend of the president of Venezuela and, of course, I was in the good graces of the Democratic party.

MILLER: After this initial approach by the State Department in the spring of 1961, when did your appointment as ambassador become announced?

MOSCOSO: The appointment was announced around the beginning of ~~1961~~. Let me try to remember. ^g ~~the~~ ^g the appointment was announced around the third week in ⁱⁿ March. I do recall that I was in Washington on one of my several trips at that time when President Kennedy delivered his initial speech on the Alliance for Progress.

MILLER: Were you at that?

MOSCOSO: ^{I was not,} I was not present.

MILLER: And after your appointment was announced, when did you first see the president?

MOSCOSO: I first saw the president prior to leaving for Venezuela.

MILLER: And that was in the fall?

MOSCOSO: No, no, that was around the end of March. Yes ✓

MILLER: The end of March.

MOSCOSO: Yes, around the end of March.

MILLER: At that meeting in the end of March...

MOSCOSO: I ^{is} am sorry, it was not the end of March because I left two weeks after that for Venezuela so that must have been around April, around April. The beginning of April, yes. The usual good-by meeting was arranged and I went to see the president very briefly to bid him farewell and I asked him for a small ^{moment} ~~moment~~ ^{or present, if I could.} ~~present, if I could.~~ He promptly ^{got a hold of} pulled a copy of his, Profiles in Courage, and wrote a very nice dedication of the book.

MILLER: This, then, was your first actual meeting with President Kennedy.

MOSCOSO: This was the first actual meeting with the president.

I recall very well one of the questions that he asked me. He wanted to know how I felt the Bay of Pigs incident would affect my job in Venezuela. I told him that the job was a difficult one, as he well knew, because of the convergence of left and right extremism in trying to topple over the Betancourt government and that the Bay of Pigs incident would probably make it just a little bit more difficult but that was about all. He seemed extremely concerned with my answer because I believe ~~that~~ he felt very deeply that whatever made relations with Latin America a little ^{bit} ~~but~~ more difficult to handle because of the Cuban incident could be and would be attributed by history primarily to ~~him~~ and he felt this responsibility very deeply in his soul.

MILLER: Did he make any other reference to the Bay of Pigs incident?

MOSCOSO: No, when we had this little exchange he turned around in his chair and looked quite sadly out at the lawn of the White House. I just got the impression that this ^{was something that} weighed quite heavily in his soul.

Even though he was a young man, I felt that this incident had really shaken him to his very roots.

MILLER: Did the president mention anything about President Betancourt?

MOSCOSO: Yes, he mentioned President Betancourt and expressed a great admiration for the man's courage. That's why as soon as I asked for a ~~momento~~^e for Betancourt, he immediately got a copy of his book and I recall the words. The words were more or less to this effect: "To President Romulo Betancourt, a great democrat and a man of courage, ^e of abundant courage."

MILLER: Who else was at that ^{particular} meeting?

MOSCOSO: No, this was one of those meetings which was completely private. I do recall an incident ^{usually} an ambassador ^{after} after he leaves the president's office after one of these farewell ceremonies ^{is} is accosted by the newspaper people representing newspapers or wire services that service the country to which one is accredited. They accost you and they want to know what your views are about the country's particular political situation at the moment. The

president was very much concerned with the increased criticism of the leftist press and the ultra rightist press in Caracas with my appointment. The Communists and the reactionary right again joined forces in order to thwart the appointment of someone who was considered to be friendly towards the Betancourt government, so a very intense attack had been mounted against my appointment and the city of Caracas had been amply defaced by scrawlings on the walls perpetrated primarily by the extreme left urging that I be thrown out or that I be declared dead and things to that effect. There were intimations of riots in the streets by students, workers and so forth as soon as I got there, and it was at the request of the chargé and the mission down in Caracas that I had delayed my leaving for the post for a couple of weeks, but I finally decided that either I went when I had to go or I had better drop the whole idea of representing the United States in Caracas, so I decided to set a date and to have the mission notified and take the con-

sequences of whatever happened there. I must say that President Betancourt told our chargé that he would guarantee that anything that happened could be placed under control. It was with these assurances that the mission ^{Sinally} acceded to my going down. ^{It} Now, President Kennedy wanted ^{it} to know ^{it} that I was going to be, not only his representative like all ambassadors are, but his special representative and he was sending me there because he felt that I could assist President Betancourt in carrying out the policies of his government with whom he was in complete accord. ^{instead of} So my giving an interview to the newspaper men when I left the president's office a special release dictated by the president was issued by his office as I left the White House. I understand that this does not usually happen and I think it had the desired effect because when I got to Caracas people had no questions in their minds about the fact that the president knew what he was doing and knew why he was doing it.

MILLER: The president had indicated his personal concern ^{I gather} about the leftist and rightist extremists who had caused the press comment and the rest in Caracas.

MOSCOSO: Yes, he was aware of it. As you know, the president was a voracious reader. How on earth he was ever able to wade through so much stuff, and retain what he read was beyond my comprehension, but apparently, every one of these wires coming in from Caracas on the protests to my appointment were read by him because he was very much aware of what was happening.

MILLER: So that in your discussion, which lasted ^s 1/11, How long did your talk last?

MOSCOSO: We talked for about twenty minutes.

MILLER: He had indicated ^a personal knowledge of a good deal ^{of the B the} 1/11.

MOSCOSO: Yes, yes.
MILLER: deal ^{of what} exactly of what was going on on the ground.

MOSCOSO: Yes, and he also asked me to immediately send him a personal report as soon as I got there.

MILLER: You left then for Caracas shortly after your interview.

MOSCOSO: Yes, by air, with my family.

MILLER: During this period of time did you send a report to the president of the activities?

MOSCOSO: Yes, I sent several reports to him. I much preferred to devote my time to assisting the government of Venezuela which at that was going through a very critical crisis and therefore my reports were

extremely brief. I did communicate repeatedly,
however, with Dick Goodwin, ^[Richard N. Goodwin] whom I knew had the
president's ear in connection with some of the
delays that were taking place in the handling of
some of the loans or some of ~~the~~ delays, par-
ticularly in the case of the ^{EX-IM} ~~Exon~~ bank and in the ^[Export-Import Bank of Washington]
case of the ^[Development Loan Fund] DLF. I wanted Dick to assist me in
accelerating these.

MILLER: This was during the summer of 1961?

MOSCOSO: That's right. That's right.

MILLER: And you were in Venezuela as the ambassador during
this period of time?

MOSCOSO: That's right. By the way, there was a little
incident that took place just prior to my taking
office. I had remained in Washington to finish
with passport pictures and things of that kind,
and a mission from Venezuela came into town
urgently requesting emergency assistance, primarily
budget support and balance of payments assistance.
I was asked to participate in all of the meetings
and to take them around to the DLF, ^{and} the ^{EX-IM} ~~Exon~~ bank
and the other agencies in town including agriculture
^[Department of Agriculture]

where we wanted to see if we could get a PL-480
free program going. Since there was no aid or
ECA [Department of Economic Affairs, United Nations]
any kind of mission in Venezuela, very few people
knew exactly what the requirements of assistance
were, so I had to grope in the dark and help these
people as best I could. I thought it would be
desirable, in view of the high caliber of the
members of the mission which included, by the way,
the governor of the Federal District of Caracas
which is one of the top jobs in the government there
and the fact that Manolo Perez-Querero, the head of
[La Oficina Central de Coordinación y Planificación]
Cordiplan, the most important coordinating and
planning agency in the government happened to be a
member of the mission, I decided to have him meet
some of the people ^{at} of the White House, so I took
them over one afternoon and introduced them to Dick
Goodwin who in turn got Mr. ^{Rostow [Walt W. Rostow]} ~~Rastau~~ who was attending
a meeting to come out and say hello to them and
somehow or other President Kennedy learned that
this group was here, that I was with them and going
from one appointment to another he just barged
into the Fish room there and said, "Hello, Ted,

are these your friends from Venezuela?" I introduced ^{these people} ~~him to them~~ and he just sat down there and chatted with them for ten or fifteen minutes. Needless to say, everyone in that Venezuelan mission was tremendously impressed by the president and appreciated, greatly, the fact that in spite of his very busy schedule he would take time out to show his great admiration and sympathy for the government of President Betancourt. Now those are the kinds of traits which I think distinguished President Kennedy. He just knew exactly what was the thing that some people would appreciate more and knowing that these were faithful followers of Betancourt and his government, [^] he was briefed about it, I am sure, someone must have told him that this was the case ^{but} he took the time out from his very tight schedule to show his backing for this government. I am sure that when these people got back to Caracas, they immediately told that to President Betancourt or even before that, [^] they probably called him on the phone or sent him a wire _o and these are the kinds

of things that I think ^{the} the kinds of endorsements
the things that gave President Betancourt confi-
dence under the ^{narrowing} difficult days of 1961-62
permitted him to vanquish the foe.

MILLER: Did the president in this brief meeting indicate a
considerable grasp of Venezuelan affairs?

MOSCOSO: Very much so. Very much so. In view of the fact
that my appointment had been criticized, I think
that he took extraordinary pains to find out what
the background was. Another thing was that quite
a number of people had already pointed out to
President Kennedy the particular important place
that Venezuela represented in the scheme of things
ⁱⁿ of Latin American affairs as of this moment, and in
view of the fact that already there was some possi-
bility of a Castro ^{inspired} subversive movement
in Venezuela, the president took additional in-
terest in finding out what the facts were.

MILLER: From your traditional farewell meeting ^{with the president and from this} and ~~this~~
brief meeting, what would you say was the
president's view in the spring of 1961 towards
Betancourt? How did he look upon him ^{as an individual?}

MOSCOSO: The president felt that Castro was not the root cause for some of the problems that we were beginning to have in Latin America. We were already ^{were} having them but ^{we} were becoming more and more aware of them ^{where} here in the United States. He viewed ^{him} them more or less as ^{an} effect, as ^{the} a result of, these deep-seated, long-standing deficiencies in the Latin American society with the great injustices, with the lack of social and economic opportunities and I believe that his backing for the Alliance for Progress which he later developed into ^{the} a program was very sincere and was ² based on his analysis of the Latin American situation as he saw it. These deep-rooted causes he felt had to be mitigated if there was ever going to be peace and tranquility in ^{the} ~~this~~ hemisphere.

MILLER: Since this was very shortly after the Bay of Pigs episode, ^{MOSCOSO: That's right. That's right.} ^{... MILLER: ...} do you think that the president regarded Betancourt as a kind of a symbol in anyway for the future ^{that} in Latin America that should be reinforced?

MOSCOSO: Yes, even at that early stage and without having met Betancourt personally, I think that the

president felt that he was attuned to the aspirations of Betancourt and his government. I must say that in later years and after meeting Betancourt personally the president was reaffirmed in his original appreciation of what Betancourt represented, and after having observed the president work closely with at least eight or nine Latin American presidents undoubtedly President Betancourt remained his favorite.

MILLER: What do you think went into this feeling on President Kennedy's part, ^{with Betancourt?} even at this early date? Was this from his reading do you think or ~~was it from his~~ ^{some} experiences? ^{or} Did he mention anything?

MOSCOSO: I think that the president felt that Betancourt's socio-economic approach to government was very much in keeping with his own. Betancourt seemed to be to him like an embattled young new dealer facing not only the foes of poverty, ^{and} ignorance and disease but the twin foes of communism, ^{and} totalitarianism and reactionary conservatism, and somehow or other he identified himself with ^{somebody} Betancourt and his problems. And the other thing ^{that} which I think

that the president felt about Betancourt was that the man had tremendous resources of courage and the president was a great admirer of people who had courage as his book well shows.

MILLER: ^{So} It was your impression, at least, that the president had acquired this feeling from just ordinary news sources, reading as well as ~~from~~.

MOSCOSO: News sources, reading and from information ~~from~~ ^{that} some of his friends who were conversant ^{with} ~~in~~ Latin American affairs had ~~to~~ ^{passed} on to him. For instance, Adolph Berle ^[Adolph A. Berle] ⁵ Berry ⁹ who was quite prominent in Latin American affairs at the beginning of the Kennedy administration, ⁵ was a good friend of Betancourt and I am quite sure that he conveyed some of these ideas to President Kennedy.

MILLER: During the summer after you had gone to Venezuela did you have any personal communications with the president or receive any personal communications ^{from} ~~with~~ the president ^{during period of} ~~at~~ this time?

MOSCOSO: No, I received the communication that was sent to all the ambassadors around June, I believe, of that year in which we were told that all chiefs of missions were running their own show and that federal agencies including the military were

going to be coordinated with the work of the embassy and its staff and I took the letter quite literally ^{while} ~~without~~ ^{implementing} realizing that it was going to be a delicate thing because some of the agencies, particularly the military establishment, had more or less run their operations their own way without too much coordination or communication with the embassy staff. Sure the country team concept was beginning to emerge but it had not emerged full blown by any means. Beyond that the next communication which I got, was, of course, the one in which he urgently asked me to come to Washington and discuss the possibility of taking on the Alliance for Progress job.

MILLER: And that request came in the fall of 1961?

MOSCOSO: Yes, around the end of October. I had been in Venezuela about six months, if I recall, when I got this communication from him. In the meantime I had had the visit in Caracas of the president's brother, ^[Edward M. Kennedy] Ted Kennedy, ~~and~~ and since I had known that the president had a special feeling for this young, kid brother of his and considered him potentially perhaps

the best politician in the family, I took it upon myself to try him out in foreign fields and brought him in contact with the labor leaders of Venezuela and found that he got along very well with them to the point where he asked me to bring them in for breakfast one morning and find out what their aspirations were, and this was an extremely fruitful morning, not only for Ted Kennedy, but for me, and I think it was an extremely great occasion for the labor leaders of Venezuela who perhaps for the first time were sitting down with the brother of a president of the United States and telling him just exactly what they thought of Venezuela, its government, the United States, the United States' president and the government of the United States. Furthermore, Ted Kennedy also wanted to find out how farmers worked and lived, and what they thought. We arranged for a meeting with Mr. Kennedy and a group of ^{Sarm} ~~foreign~~ leaders out in the countryside ⁱⁿ of Venezuela quite a number of hours away from the city ^{ieso}. When he came back that afternoon

from this rather extended visit to the countryside. He brought back some magnificent pictures of the brother of the president of the United States hatless, coatless, tieless in a warm abrazo with the farm leaders of Venezuela, obviously, enjoying themselves as they had a few drinks and sang some old songs. I proceeded to send these photographs to President Kennedy immediately to show the virtuosity of his brother.

MILLER: You came back, then, about the end of October or early November, 1961. ^{And} When did you see the president? Did you see the president immediately?

MOSCOSO: I saw the president the day after I had arrived. It was late in the afternoon and he asked me to go upstairs to the livingroom, the second-floor livingroom. He, more or less, gave me ^{no} an alternative. He ^{just said} ~~did not say~~ that I had to take this job and that he had discussed it with several people and that he felt that I was the obvious choice and more or less implied that there was no use arguing with him. I, perhaps, should have given some more thought to the job. I, perhaps, should have asked for some commitments in ^{so far} as staff, organization, tie-ins with the other ^{government} ~~government~~ agencies of ^{government} agencies and so forth, but in my great ignorance of the Washington jungle, I did not ask for these commitments.

MILLER: The president's appointment book shows a meeting with him on November 3, 1961. Would that be the meeting about which you are talking just now?

MOSCOSO: That's right.

MILLER: And was there anyone else besides you and the president present at this meeting?

MOSCOSO: Dick Goodwin came in and out on one or two occasions. That was about all. He was ^{the} Dick was there when the final handshake took place after about twenty-five or thirty minutes ^{of} arguing. I must say that I did have a little bit of a discussion with the president about something else ^{that} ~~which~~ had nothing to do with the Alliance or my new job. He asked me about Betancourt. I told him how he was coming along, ^{how} Venezuela was coming along, and then he wanted to know about Betancourt's feeling with regards to the Dominican Republic and about the possibility of someone buying out the Trujillo properties in the Dominican Republic in an endeavor to get rid of the family. The idea was that, ^{if} the Trujillos could liquidate ^{by} the Trujillos I mean the ^[Raphael Leonidas Trujillo] Dictator's ^{sons,} daughters and brothers ^{that} if these people could liquidate their holdings there, it might be possible for them to gracefully bow out of the picture and go and enjoy their ill-gotten gains somewhere ~~else~~ in Europe or God knows where. I told the president that I thought that the procedure was a poor one. In the first place, it set a very bad precedent and, in the second place, I understood that one of the people who had been considered to purchase these properties was a gentleman from Boston, Mr. ^[Thomas A. Pappas] Pappas, and I just thought that this would be ^{interpreted, or} misinterpreted if someone who ~~(is~~ apparently a friend of the family and known to the president were to buy

these properties and, furthermore, and this was a real
 "clincher" in my mind as an argument was the fact that the
 Dominican people thought that Trujillo had stolen these
 properties or built them with the ill-gotten gains of his
 thirty-one-year's regime and that, if these properties
 were to be put in private hands, the Dominican people, the
 whole three and a half million of them would feel that
 the national patrimony had been passed along to private
 hands who had no right to own these properties and to
 enjoy them. Well, I think the president did not very
 much take to my suggestion because I believe that he felt
 that in the balance of convenience it was better to suffer
 a misunderstanding on the part of the people of Latin
 America or the Dominican Republic rather than to continue
 to suffer the presence of the Trujillos in Latin America
 the Dominican Republic. I told the president that he had
 to take the broader view, that what he did in the Dominican
 Republic would have hemisphere-wide repercussions and that
 the Dominican Republic was inconsequential in my thinking as
 compared to the image that would be blurred in the eyes of the Latin American
 would be blurred if something like this were done. Well, I
 am happy to say that the transaction did not take place.

MILLER: This would have been a sale for cash?

MOSCOSO: For cash, yes.

MILLER: ~~from~~ the Trijillo heirs.

MOSCOSO: That's right, to private entrepreneurs headed by Mr. Papas.

MILLER: This would have been a syndicate of Americans, by and large?

MILLER: Did the president... MOSCOSO?

MOSCOSO: That's right, that's right ^{and}, of course, in exchange for that the Trijillos apparently ^{would} ~~were~~ promised to get out of the island.

MILLER: Did the president seem worried that the alternative, as far as the Trijillo heirs were concerned, would be that they would loot the treasury or was this just a quick method of getting them out of the country?

MOSCOSO: This was a quick method of getting them out of the country. He was very much concerned about the fact that even though the Dictator had been ^{as} assassinated by the Dominicans, themselves, ^{the} that family was so preponderant that, for all intents and purposes, the dictator was not dead.

MILLER: This particular scheme of purchase, did it seem to be well developed in the president's mind or was it a very..././.

MOSCOSO: No, it was one of those ideas ^{that} which had been emerging. I believe that Mr. ^[Igor L. Cassini] Casini had something with passing this idea along. I did notice, however, that, in spite of the fact that the president had felt that maybe this ^{is} ~~was~~ a good scheme at first ~~boom,~~ ~~boom,~~ as soon as I mentioned these objections to him, he saw them. He was annoyed by the fact that

perhaps he hadn't seen them as clearly before and that something that looked like a good thing was no longer a good thing, at least not in my eyes, and therefore questionable in his and nothing came out of it.

MILLER: Did the president mention that he had any support or that there was support from other individuals in the United States other than those willing to make the purchase?

MOSCOSO: Yes, apparently some people had urged him to go along with something like this. I believe that ^[George C. McGhee] George McGee had talked to him about it and Robert ^[Robert D. Murphy] ~~name~~ -- Murphy had also had something to do with it. Oh, what's his

MILLER: After you had finished your discussion about the plan and you had mentioned the reasons ^{that} why you opposed it, did you feel that the president had made up his mind that he would not do it or did you feel that it was still ~~||~~.

MOSCOSO: No, I felt that I had injected a ^{big} ~~good~~ question mark into the whole scheme. I didn't get the impression that he had then and there decided against it but I did get the impression that he now was questioning the scheme and would give it

further thought.

MILLER: Did you hear anything about the scheme thereafter again^{or} or

← MOSCOSO: ← No, no, nothing took place.

MILLER: So that as far ^{of} from your capacity then as a coordinator ^{of} for the Alliance for Progress, a job that you took up ^{some} several months ^{there,} after, you never heard about the scheme ^{again?}

MOSCOSO: No, no.

MILLER: ^{again?} Moving back then ^g to the discussion about Venezuela and also the new job as head of the Alliance for Progress, did the president have a very clear idea at that point as to how he wished the Alliance for Progress to operate?

MOSCOSO: No, I believe he had a pretty clear idea what he wanted to do but not exactly how it was going to be done. He, obviously, wanted the Alliance to be a top program in his scheme of things. I believe that he wanted the Alliance to be on a par with the Peace Corps which, even in those early days, was being recognized as one of the most imaginative and

idealistic enterprises that this government had ever undertaken in the foreign relations field, and so I got the full impact of the objectives that he wanted to pursue but I don't think he exactly knew where this was going to fit in. I do remember that the wire he sent me he said ~~that~~ Fowler Hamilton and I have agreed that you are the best man. I, however, thought it a little unusual that, when the discussion took place with the president, Mr. Hamilton was not present. At that very moment I started to get the uneasy feeling that this was going to be one of those situations where you perhaps have to work with two bosses, one of them who doesn't exactly understand what the other one wants or how he wants it done. The first ^{inkling} thinking of this fear, ^{and} first confirmation of this fear, came when the swearing-in took place. I remember that there was going to be the typical ^{AID [Agency for International Development]} aide type of swearing-in in the Fifth Floor Reception Room and everything was set for it. Early the morning of that day I got a call from the president saying, "Say, what's ^{is} this I hear that you ^{are} are going to be sworn in over there in the aide ^{AID} offices? ^{and, so forth.} To hell with that! I don't want

that. I want you to come over here. We ^{are} ~~are~~ going
to hold this right here ^{and} I've ^{already} told Pierre
[Pierre E. G. Salinger] ~~Dear~~ to arrange for the press to be here and so
forth and you come on in at such and such an hour."

I recall that it was at four o'clock or something
like that. "And we ^{will} hold it here." Who do you
want to swear you in?" Well, I didn't know how
these things were done so I had seen distinguished
jurists sometimes present at the swearing-in

ceremony so I called up my old friend Bill Douglas ^[William O. Douglas]

and asked him, "would you please swear me in?"

And he accepted, for which I am forever thankful,

and we converged on the White House ^{around} ~~about~~ four

o'clock that afternoon and the swearing-in
ceremony took place.

MILLER: And the president's appointment book shows that
as being November 14, 1961. ^{Miller:} That's ~~is~~ ^{the recording} ~~is~~ your recollection
of the date.

~~Miller:~~ MOSCOSO: ~~The fourteenth,~~ That's right. Yes, because you see
after my meeting with him at the White House on the
third, I told him that I needed at least twenty-
four hours to check with my wife. After all, she

had already moved three times in the past year and I thought that the least I could do was to check with her, ^{and} so I called my wife that evening and I told her and she said, "Well you seem to want to take it." I says, "Yes, this is going to mean a very substantial reduction in income and all of the things that go with an embassy but I think that we ought to do it and she immediately agreed.

Well, I had to go home and turn over. ^{well}, I had to say goodbye to the president of the country to which I was accredited. I had to make the usual protocol visits which I handled by having one ^{big} ~~big~~ cocktail party and ^{speaking} very briefly to the diplomatic ^{corps}. I had the unfortunate problem of my mother becoming extremely sick and having to have an emergency operation so I had to go to Puerto Rico for a few days in between ^{and} then finally, I on the twelfth, I believe, I got here and on the fourteenth was the swearing-in ceremony.

MILLER: The president was present at the swearing-in ceremony?

MOSCOSO: On, yes, not only that, but he made a little speech and then he asked me to ^{spe}ak and I spoke for a few

minutes and then he says, "Now I want you to say the same thing in Spanish." So I had to say it in Spanish since a group of Latin American ambassadors had been invited. I think they appreciated being able to hear what I had to say in their own language and I also noticed that quite a number of the press people from the Latin American press corps.

MILLER: In your discussion on the third of November, did the president refer to the initial announcement ^{of} ~~for~~ the Alliance for Progress on March 13, I believe it was, 1961?

MOSCOSO: Yes, yes, as a matter of fact, the president knew the key words of that speech and he also remembered quite well the Declaration of the Peoples of the Americas which is a preamble to the Charter of Punta del Este. No, there wasn't any doubt in anybody's mind that he was well aware of what the Alliance was about and what the objectives were. It was just exactly how he fit it, that grand design that he had in mind with the bureaucratic, ^{within} ~~framework here,~~ the bureaucratic framework here, ^{with} ~~framework here,~~ what was still nebulous, I believe in his mind.

MILLER: Was it your impression at this time that the president felt that the Charter of Punta del Este was an important and historic document?

MOSCOSO: Yes, I think that he was quite aware of the historic qualities of the charter. I must say that a few of us had been disappointed after the president's speech back in March 11, I think it was ^{the} the original Alliance for Progress speech ^{when} when there was no almost automatic reaction like some of us expected. Some of us had in mind what happened in Europe after Secretary Marshall's ^[George C. Marshall] Harvard speech were sorely disappointed that the initiative wasn't grasped by the Latin Americans. A few of us had circulated a declaration of our own in answer to the president's very generous offer of assistance to Latin America and a number of the democratic left-of-center parties, ^{the} so-called democratic left parties, took it upon themselves to circulate this document to promptly get it into the president's hands to show that at least ^{of} there was some understanding on the part of certain elements in Latin American politics of what he was trying to do and to show some appreciation of what

he was trying to do but there was no phone calling of the ~~advant~~ ^{Bevin} type ^{which} that took place the evening of the Marshall speech. As you know, Mr. ^{Bevin} was getting ready for bed or he was already in bed and the last program of the BBC ^[British Broadcasting Corporation] was broadcasting Mr. Marshall's speech, Secretary Marshall's speech, and he got on the phone that very evening and woke up a number of the prime ministers of the European nations and in less than thirty days they had put together the OEEC ^[Organization for European Economic Co-operation.]

MILLER: Did you feel that the president was disappointed in this? Did he, did you ever have any indication...?

MOSCOSO: I don't think he was too aware or expected that kind of reaction. I think that he had so many other things to worry about that he didn't have a chance to become disappointed too readily with the frailties of other's ^{and who} conduct. But those of us who were interested in Latin America ^{and who} were quite alert to the potential were disturbed. The manifestos, ~~as~~ we call it, of the parties of the democratics of Latin America was never given very much publicity and I don't think that more than a

few hundred people, those of us who had something to do with getting it together, ~~were ever~~ remembered ^{it} anymore.

MILLER: At the swearing-in ceremony on November 14, 1961, when you were sworn in as a co-ordinator ^{of} for the Alliance for Progress, did the president have any opportunity to speak to you privately at that time? Or did you...

MOSCOSO: Yes, for instance I remember his insistence that, "You are going to be the director or the co-ordinator of this. I don't want you to be called assistant secretary, assistant administrator. I want you to have the top job at the alliance." Well, that sounded fine but I was still under Mr. Hamilton and there's where I, with my very little experience in Washington, I was not aware of the full import of this diffuse idea that the president had ~~of~~ exactly ^{of how} ~~where~~ I fitted in. If I had known about it, I am quite sure that I would have then told the president, "Mr. President, let's study this a little bit more. You want me to head a program but Mr. Hamilton is effectively the head of the program. Now, does he know about this; does he agree with it? This first priority that you want this program to have, the fact that you don't want me known as an assistant to Mr.

Hamilton, you want me known as a coordinator.

Is that ^{an} ~~in~~ agreement with him?"

MILLER: You had one telephone call from the president inviting you to have the swearing-in ceremony at the White House...

MOSCOSO: Yes.

MILLER: ^{... that afternoon.} Were there any other communications between you and the president between your meeting with him on November ^{third} ~~5~~ when you went upstairs to the living quarters and discussed this matter and generally agreed with him, and the morning of November ^{fourteenth} ~~5~~?

MOSCOSO: No, no, but immediately after the swearing-in ceremony, the day after, I remember he called me up and wanted to know how I was coming along with my staff. Well, I had barely known, found out, what kind of a staff I was going to have or whether I had any option in the kind of staff I was going to have. He called me up to recommend a very knowledgeable person who is the editor of one of the newspapers in Miami and who he suggested might be very useful in the public information field or as a deputy. I then had one or two calls from him later on to find out how the choice of staff was coming along et cetera.

MILLER: From him being the president?

MOSCOSO: From the president. Perhaps, ^{perhaps} again, if I had known more about Washington's, the way things were done in Washington, I should have taken advantage more of this fact that we had this ability to communicate with each other, but in my work, type of thinking in so far as administrative management is concerned, I always thought that I had to go through Mr. Hamilton and that anytime I communicated with the president, I was really by-passing Mr. Hamilton which I thought was not a good way to run a program.

MILLER: In the president's first telephone call after this meeting concerning the person from Miami, was this a personal ^{MOSCOSO: Yes.} interest ^{MILLER: Yes.} which he, the president, had?

MOSCOSO: Yes, he wanted to know how I was coming along and the choice of my staff and particularly my deputy and if I had enough names to choose from and, "Keep in mind so and so," and he mentioned the name of this editor. ? ?

MILLER: After the swearing-in ceremony, did you have any further talks about staff or the Alliance for Progress with the president?

MOSCOSO: No, after that we had a number of meetings prior to his visit to Venezuela and Colombia. I believe it was in between the swearing-in and this trip

to Venezuela that something took place which gave me another inkling of the depth of the president's commitment to the alliance. One Sunday on the New York Times front page there was a statement by a high State Department official to the effect, that in view of the threat of one of the states in Brazil to expropriate the properties of a United States owned telephone company, the United States would immediately withdraw all aid and assistance to Brazil, if such a step were taken. Now, I was having breakfast ^{that} Sunday morning when I got a call from Dick Goodwin. He was calling either from the White House or Camp David, he was somewhere with the president, and the president wanted to know through Dick, he was standing right there, whether or not I was the one who had said this. I was a little bit annoyed ^{at} with the fact that Dick Goodwin or the president, himself, would think that I was giving out information like that and I said, "I most certainly do not know about it and I am quite sure ^{that} you know that I didn't say this." "Well," Dick said, ^{well,} "the president is asking anyone and everyone who might have ^{had} anything to do with this." Then Dick told me ^{that} the president's concern is that if the alliance is going to be made a pawn in this quarrel between the United States private

enterprise and the countries of Latin America, it is going to flounder on those grounds and we must be very careful to protect it. And I ^{said} says, "I am absolutely sure that we must be very careful." And then I suggested, "why don't you call the people at the State Department because they ^{are} are the ones who would have handled something like that. That is not really something that would go to AID ^[Agency for International Development]. And, of course, afterwards the president called Bob Woodward ^[Robert F. Woodward] and the person was identified.

MILLER: But the... Dick Goodwin was standing in the president's presence, as far as you knew, at the time and gave the ^{definite} impression that the president did not wish, at least at that time, to use the ^{aid} AID program to Venezuela as a weapon ^{to}...

MOSCOSO: The ^{aid} AID program to any country in Latin America as a weapon to make them knuckle under whatever foreign-owned private company wanted to do in any particular country and he also felt that here in the United States we do expropriate sometimes the properties of private enterprises for public policy reasons. What, of course, we always do is provide them with prompt and adequate compensation. But at that time prompt and adequate

compensation was not even the issue at all. It was ^{just} merely, if you threaten to or if you go ahead and expropriate, we will immediately cut off ^{aid} As a result of that, of course, ^{you know,} we got the ~~aid~~ ^{trouble with Berlin}

MILLER: Later on then, in December the president went to Venezuela and Columbia stopping off in Puerto Rico at the time.

MOSCOSO: That's right. By that time ^{by that time} I had started to shape up my thinking a little bit about the administrative set-up of the alliance and I decided that, if possible, we ought to set apart, as much apart as the Peace Corps was, from the rest of the foreign policy machinery in the State Department. I prepared a very brief memo to the president telling him what I thought we ought to do. I suggested two alternatives. One was to create within the AID machinery a public corporation that would handle the alliance and give it a certain degree of autonomy within AID or create a separate agency attached or loosely attached to the State Department, like the Peace Corps, which would handle the program with full autonomy under him and under the general direction of the Secretary of State, the wordings to be more or less the same as the wording of the Peace Corps Act. I told the president that to give physical effect to this decision, if he agreed to it,

we had found a building and we would immediately move to it, a very small building perfectly capable of holding the four or five hundred people, which is all the people that I thought that we needed, and where an esprit de corps could be generated ^{quite easily} by ~~these~~ people because in less than three months everybody would know everybody by their first name. This building, not being a part of the federal complex but being outside of, although close by, would set the agency apart, serve to give it a certain image, not only with the government here in Washington, but also in Latin America. I also told him that we had been able to identify a good emblem, a good symbol, and that we would put flags of the alliance around the building. We would try to create an image and we would, in that way, capture the imagination and the loyalties, not only of our staff people, but also of the people out in the field and of Latin Americans in general. In the plane going down to Venezuela, the president agreed to this and when I got back from Colombia, which was the last country we visited, I immediately tried to implement the decision and we...

MILLER: The memorandum had gone forward before the president left for Venezuela on the fifteenth of December. Is that right?

MOSCOSO: I don't recall if I sent it before. I do know that I had it with me during the trip and, unfortunately, most of these files are now somewhere else and I haven't been able to get to those. All I was able to do was get these since I saw you this morning but the building was gotten hold of right here on Pennsylvania Avenue, a new building, very small, couldn't hold more than four or five hundred people with a little bit of an auditorium which was fine for large staff meetings. The quarters were not ~~that~~ elaborate, I would say rather austere, but excellent for our purposes, no different than what the Peace Corps had and we proceeded to give the orders for the removal over the week-end and the desks were marked. Everybody put his stuff in the desks and we were all set to go when the Friday before the move a call came in from Mr. Ball saying that the move was suspended.

MILLER: You had talked with the president on the way down to Venezuela.

MOSCOSO: That's right, that's right.

MILLER: He went from here in Washington to Puerto Rico.

MOSCOSO: That's right and from there to Venezuela and from Venezuela to Colombia and then back again.

MILLER: In your conversations with the president on ~~your~~ ^{the} the way down, did you make a formal presentation of the memorandum or an oral presentation?

MOSCOSO: I made an oral presentation of the memorandum.

MOSCOSO: Dick Goodwin was there.

MILLER: Was anyone else there ~~in~~ ^{Miller} the plane discussing this matter with you?

MOSCOSO: Dick Goodwin was there. ~~Dick Goodwin was there.~~

MILLER: And it was your impression that the president, after listening to you and some comments...

MOSCOSO: That's right, had agreed to the move.

MILLER: He said definitely, yes.

MOSCOSO: That's right. I must say, that, perhaps it was my desire to go ahead with this declaration of autonomy which would have given the program its ^{I believed, its} own proper image, that made me skip the fact that the president might want to check with the state people before such a move was made. Presumably, someone had an after thought and the check was made and the decision was that this is not going to be a desirable thing for the program because it will disconnect it too much from the vital interests and policies of the United States.

MILLER: Did you discuss this at any other time with the president on the trip or was it done all at one time?

MOSCOSO: No, we mentioned it once or twice ^{everytime} everytime that I thought of the things that one could do and of the advantages that would accrue because of this

independent stance, because of this program standing out by itself and one falling or getting on his feet on the basis of accomplishment, I would mention it to him. For instance, when we arrived in Colombia, these alliance signs were all over the ^{darn} place.

MILLER: The symbol now used by the ^{that's} alliance for progress?

MOSCOSO: That's right. The symbol now used by the alliance. I told the president, ^{these} these are the kinds of things that will create an image of the alliance in the minds of the people both in Latin America and in the United States.

MILLER: Did the president seem very receptive? ^{He was very receptive.}

MOSCOSO: Yes, oh yes, he was very receptive. ^{As a matter} of fact, I think that if I had not accepted Mr. ^{Ball's} dictum and had decided to fight it, I think that probably by this time we would have....

MILLER: After...

MOSCOSO: Now, I understand that, of course, Dave Bell who ^{at} was at that time ^{the} the Bureau of the Budget had gotten the official memo and had objected strenuously that something like this be done. The most that he was willing to go along with was that we have a separate line of the budget. That we did get eventually. That's why the alliance got its own funds ^{but} but the rest of it ^o Dave thought ^e was bad ^{and} and I suppose that the people who advise him, the

staff people who handle the State Department affairs, were the ones who brought this to the attention of everybody at state.

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MILLER: Did you discuss in the weeks thereafter, after this trip, this matter with the president before Mr. Ball's telephone call came down?

MOSCOSO: No, no, ^{no} after Mr. Ball's decision was made, insofar as I was concerned, even though I didn't agree to it, that was the end of the matter. You see I was still operating under the scheme of things which gave me an organization chart which indicated that here was the president of the United States, here was the secretary of state and a little bit under him was the administrator of ~~aid~~ ^{AID}, right along the same lines as the administrator of ~~aid~~ ^{AID} ~~was~~ ^{is} the ~~other~~ ^{under} secretary and I'm ~~an~~ way down below ~~and~~ ^{was} as far as I ~~am~~ concerned, anything that came from these three people, the secretary, the administrator and the undersecretary was enough for me. That was the end. Again, I did not realize that this open channel was there and that I could have contested this.

MILLER: Going back to the trip through Venezuela and Colombia, Mrs. Kennedy was with the president at this time, as I recall, is that right?

MOSCOSO: Yes.

MILLER: In going down to Venezuela and Colombia and before you left, did you have any meetings with the president in briefing him?

MOSCOSO: Yes, we had the usual briefing meetings with the president with the heavy books. I must say that those few days before the trip were days of tremendous anxiety on my part. In the first place, I had had quite a bit to do with encouraging this trip when I was ambassador down there, ^{and} in the second place, there had been mounting indications of subversive activities in Caracas and, even though the security people had given clearance to the trip, they still had their misgivings about the whole scheme, ^{and} both Dick Goodwin and I bit our fingernails repeatedly during the trip. The least we expected were manifestations of distrust in the United States from the left wing elements, and we expected the security measures to be taken to be so strict and rigid so as to make it impossible for the president to come in contact with the people. Well, what has happened is now history and it can be found in all the magazines ^{and} movies and so forth. The president had a fabulously warm reception in Caracas and when it became known in Colombia that the Venezuelans had been so warm ^{and}

forthcoming and appreciative of his visit, they lost their own fears because, you know, they also had been threatened by the extremists with all kinds of manifestaciones to try to destroy the image that the president would be creating in Latin America ~~and~~ in Colombia the crowds that greeted the ^{ident} president were estimated to be in the neighborhood of seven or eight hundred thousand ^{people} which is almost equivalent to the population of the place at that time.

MILLER: Were you involved in the security preparations for going down there at all?

MOSCOSO: No, no I was not. I had been at the time of ^{the} ~~the~~ when we were initially thinking of these visits. Our security people had looked into the thing in the embassy and, of course, they sent Washington security people to check into this. President Betancourt had assured me that he could guarantee that there would be no untoward incidences [?] ~~and~~ ^{tsd} and he was as good as his word. Now, it wasn't the measures that he took as much as what took place [?] ~~with~~ in the spirit and the souls of the Venezolanos ^o because ^o as I observed the ^{cavalcade} ~~cattle gate~~ going through the streets of Caracas, you could see that perhaps twenty feet away from the curb the silent, human mass but beyond that anyone could have picked up a grenade and tossed it over that

group and it could have fallen either on the car or near the car and ~~it~~^{he} could have easily killed the president. Well, I think that, if anyone had any desire to do anything like this, it was squeezed out of him by the tremendous warmth and enthusiasm of the people around him. In other words, whoever had tried anything like this, knew that he couldn't last more than a few seconds that he would have been torn to pieces right then and there, ~~so~~^{so} only a suicidal maniac would have tried anything like this, such was the enthusiasm of the crowds. Now, it is difficult for North Americans for Anglo Saxons to visualize that kind of warmth in a crowd. It requires someone who has been mingling with Latinos, but, believe me, it was an enthusiastic crowd.

MILLER: Did the president have any trepidations about going on this trip, do you think?

MOSCOSO: Yes, yes, the president did have some [^] but he felt that he had to do it. That he had to do it. He had read enough about Latin America ^{and} ~~or~~ its history and its people and its peculi¹arties, to [?] know that people in Latin countries admire courage, perhaps more than anything else, and he *decided that*

he was going to go through it, come what may. I think that his main concern was probably his wife but he was ready to go through with it.

MILLER: In Venezuela there were a number of conversations with Betancourt and the president. Were you present?

MOSCOSO: Yes, I was present during the several meetings that were had with Betancourt and most of the conversations hinged upon the acceleration of some of these loans that had been obtained for them at ~~Exim~~^{we} Bank and DLF and so forth and the PL-480 program ^{we} were just getting started. Looking back on these discussions, I was reminded so much of discussions that I had at the White House with other latin american presidents in front of President Kennedy where the same kind of complaint was always made that the money wasn't forthcoming fast enough. ?

MILLER: Did the president mention the Bay of Pigs to Betancourt that you can recall?

MOSCOSO: Yes, it wasn't exactly the Bay of Pigs that was mentioned. It was the Cuban problem ^{in general} Cuban subversion in particular, and it was one of the things that was discussed at the time. President Betancourt utilized the concern of the president with Cuban subversion to make formal requests for

additional military assistance and a number of us were, for the next few days after we got back, concerned trying to see ~~who~~^{if we} could accelerate or increase the amount of hardware that we were going to give the Venezuelans.

MILLER: What were President Kennedy's views towards increasing the amount of hardware in the military assistance program?

MOSCOSO: If it was going to be sophisticated hardware that would be of service in international warfare, he was not too interested because he was quite aware that this wasn't what was required. What was needed was very small arms, teargas and stuff like that, that could be used for, primarily, police action.

MILLER: President Kennedy had quite a well-defined view, already, on this subject, ^{I mean} that he believed that only... ^{de}

MOSCOSO: Yes, that's right. ^{And this} As you know, ^{had} ~~this~~^{had} been the policy that prevailed during his term. Let's try to keep that military assistance as low as possible. I don't think he had particularly ^{Morse I Wayne} ~~Senator Morris~~ in mind but he did try to reduce the military assistance program to a minimum. He wanted, as much as possible, the assistance to go for civic action and was quite articulate about the desirability of making the military participate more closely in the economic and social development

of the countries in Latin America. I think he was very much aware of the past sins of militarism in Latin America.

MILLER: Did he articulate these things to President Betancourt or was this a background against which President Kennedy operated?

MOSCOSO: This was a background against which he operated. In the case of... he had a habit of never answering immediately and directly some of these requests for obvious reasons. If this happened, the word got around and very soon these presidential visits would become just merely negotiation sessions for either more aid, more military or economic aid, so the idea was always to say, "Well, let's think it over; and we are going to do the best we can; and so and so is going to handle it quickly," and so forth and so on. But he tried to avoid making any commitments.

MILLER: Did he discuss the alliance outside of the aid features to Venezuela with Betancourt?

MOSCOSO: Yes, they spoke about the alliance in general and, of course, Betancourt mentioned the fact that the Cuban experience, and that's where the Bay of Pigs came in, had created difficulties for some of these shaky governments that required

some leftist support in order to stay in power and made it difficult for some of them to be whole heartedly in favor, to ~~articulate~~ ^{articulately} being in favor of the alliance, and that it would take a little bit of time to rub off the memory of the Cuban incident.

MILLER: In moving on to Colombia, was the president impressed by the warmth and depth of the receptions he received in Colombia as well as in Venezuela?

MOSCOSO: Yes, yes, as a matter of fact, he was very much impressed by his trip. I remember the morning that we arrived in Venezuela, we went to visit a land reform project and he made a little "off the cuff" speech and, as I sat there in front of him, I got the feeling that he felt that he was really talking to the people, but not ^{to} the people in that particular land reform area. As a matter of fact, he realized that they did not understand him and it was only after translation that they would understand him, but he realized that what he was going to say was going to cross over the borders of Venezuela and Colombia and all over the Latin American countries by virtue of the press, radio and so forth and that his message was going to be an hemispheric one rather than just a limited one there. I got that feeling because

of the way he talked and it was as inspiring
a political ^{hortatory} ~~oratory~~ speech as I have ever heard.
And he had ⁱⁿ there all of the things ^{that} ~~which~~ he believed ⁱⁿ:
the need for social reforms, the need for political
reforms, the need for modernization of the society,
the need for greater social justice, the need
for land reform, for tax reforms, et cetera.

MILLER: Was it your impression that the president's
feeling towards the Alliance for Progress was
visibly intensified by this trip?

MOSCOSO: Yes, he became aware ^{by} the physical presence of
these people, of the Latin Americans ^{that} were
going to benefit from the program eventually.
When he went around and saw the farmers, poor
undernourished people who never in their life ^{had ever}
^{have} had anything to their name except the clothing
on their back and assisted in handing them over
the title to a piece of property, ^{to} a piece of land
with a fence around it and with a house on it, he
got a fantastic lift out of this.

MILLER: The reception in Colombia was as warm, if not...

MOSCOSO: No, the reception in Colombia was warmer than
the one in Venezuela for the simple reason, as I
said before, that the Colombians had heard over
the radio and had seen in the newspapers that
there had been no untoward manifestations in
Venezuela and, if that were happening in Venezuela,

then they didn't expect any to happen in Colombia where subversion had not increased to the tempo which it had reached in Venezuela so the people were less afraid, they were more willing to take a chance. Because, remember, this was done in an atmosphere when anybody, when everybody, thought that a bomb was going to be ~~dropped~~^{thrown}, that the army would have to take to the streets and so forth.

END OF TAPE I, PART A

When nothing untoward happened, when instead of bombs being thrown at the president, they threw rose buds at him, The euphoria in the case of the Colombians was even greater and I have never seen anything since that day so far as enthusiasm, and warmth and numbers is concerned. Remember that Mexico City is at least three or four times larger than Bogotá and nevertheless in Bogotá I think you notice more people perhaps than you do even in Mexico City.

MILLER: In Colombia, where he was for one day, I believe...

MOSCOSO: One day, that's right.

MILLER: ...was ^{his} the reception by the Colombian party a good one? Did he establish a rapport with the...?

MOSCOSO: Yes, of course, ^{Lleras} ~~Yerra~~ is a slightly colder person than Betancourt, more polished in his manners and more sharply honed in his thinking.

After all, Yerra

After all, ^{Lleras} ~~Yerras~~ does have an economist's back-ground which ^{And the President} Betancourt doesn't have. One of the things I think he ^e would like to indulge in is ⁱⁿ an economic thinking and discussions. But, of course, the warmth that Betancourt conveyed, the politicians innate ability with these finely tuned antennae that they have to recognize political genius when they come across it, took place in his confrontation with Betancourt and did not exactly take place in his confrontation with ^{Lleras} ~~Yerras~~. Of course, in the case of ^{Lleras} ~~Yerras~~ he realized that the man was going to be succeeded in a few weeks and in the case of Betancourt he knew that he had two and a half more years to go, but the same respect and the same comprehension of the problems of the Latin American people was to be ^{noticed} noted in ^{Lleras} the two meetings. In the case of ^{Lleras} ~~Yerras~~, since he's ^{was} able to handle English so much better than Betancourt there was readier communication.

MILLER:

In the discussions with ^{Lleras Camargo} ~~Yerras Camarilo~~...

MOSCOSO:

Now let me tell you that one of the ~~...yes, in~~ ^{Yes, in} the discussion with ^{Lleras Camargo} ~~Yerras Camarilo~~ one of the important facets of this whole thing was the Cuban problem and the preparation for what later on became ^{the} a second meeting at Punta del Este, a January ^A meeting ^A was it January? ^A At Punta del Este.

MILLER: I think it was January or February.

MOSCOSO: Yes, that's right, it was January or February, the second Punta del Este meeting, I think it was January, and Bob Woodward and president ^{Lleras}~~Yerres~~ and Dick Goodwin worked on some of the resolutions that were going to be distributed around the countries in Latin America to see what kind of a reception they would get, so I would say that in the case of Colombia the thrust was more political than anything else. In the case of Venezuela, he was more interested in control of subversion and in the economic rehabilitation.

MILLER: Would you say, moving back to Venezuela, that the president's expectations in meeting Betancourt were realized? That this was a courageous man whom he had met?

MOSCOSO: Oh, yes, yes, very much so. You know president Betancourt came up later on to return that visit in 1963, in February 1963, the middle of February, and I have attended a number of receptions at the White House, official and so forth, and I must say that the one that he gave to Betancourt, which was an intimate one, hasn't been matched, ⁱⁿ by my estimation, by anything else that I have seen there. He refused to have one of these big parties with a big table or any of that stuff. They had a small

room of the White House set up with very small tables and, quite frankly, it reminded you of a little night club dinner party that someone had set up for a group of friends. I happened to have sat at the table with the president and Mrs. Betancourt and maybe another lady, I don't recall who it was, and, my God, he enjoyed himself hugely, the president did. Betancourt was enjoying himself even more. Mrs. Kennedy was having a wonderful time with Betancourt. Betancourt took such a liking to these wonderful people that I remember in Caracas by dinner time of the day we arrived, Betancourt, at the request of Mrs. Kennedy, was calling her Jacqueline, and instead of Betancourt having this great big, monstrous party, he took the president to his own home which was a very small place by comparison to the official residences of presidents, particularly the case of the president of Venezuela which is one of the wealthiest countries of Latin America, very small home, and they had a very intimate, little dinner party. I think we were about eighteen or twenty at the dinner table, so the president reciprocated by doing exactly the same thing, but he ^{went} ~~won~~ one better by having these small tables with four or six people seated at one and then bunched together rather closely, we got this feeling of great intimacy which is unmatched

in anything that I have seen at the White House. The talk after the dinner was something to behold. Because here was the president sitting down smoking one of those "Stogies" that he used to smoke with Betancourt chomping on his pipe and talking politics as if he were talking to David Lawrence [of Pittsburgh or anyone of the big politicians here in the United States. It was from one politician to another with great admiration being shown by each of the way he operated in his own field.

MILLER: In Colombia there was, of course, not the same report. With the...

MOSCOSO: No, no, intellectually, yes, emotionally, no, *emotionally no.* Great admiration on the part of President Kennedy for ^{Lleras} Yerras, if anything, they communicated ~~better~~ language-wise much easier, because Yerras ^s speaks very good English, but emotionally it wasn't exactly the same.

MILLER: After the return from there... Let me go back a little bit to Puerto Rico. The president did stop in Puerto Rico for a short while.

MOSCOSO: Yes, but the stop in Puerto Rico was so close to home, this ^{was} ~~is~~ U.S. territory. I was not able to get into the cavalcade because the crowd was so ^Mimense at the airport and besides I had my family there and so forth so we promptly took off somewhere

for a little chat, ^{and rest.} ~~we~~ ^H ~~we~~ went to a dinner that night at Fortaleza and, I must say that the crowd in San Juan was very, very warm, very warm and maybe this was a good introduction to the president's trip to Latin America.

MILLER: Did the president say anything about his reception in Puerto Rico or about the Puerto Rican problems to you that would be of interest?

MOSCOSO: No, this was a far-ranging conversation that took place. I think that... ^{was} ~~is~~ ^{to} ~~to~~ express his admiration for having chosen Venezuela to be the first country in Latin America that he visited. ^{well} ~~It~~ ^{is} ~~also~~ happens that everyone knows of the intimate relationship between Governor Muñoz and President Betancourt and, of course, Governor Muñoz was exaltant about the fact that President Kennedy was going to visit his old friend so he gave some ^{anecdotes} ~~anecdotes~~ about President Betancourt's ten years stay around Puerto Rico waiting for the dictatorship to be dismembered in his home country and the evening was spent in far-ranging talks about the worries of the world, local politics in the United States, etc. etc.

MILLER: Well, we might stop now, Ted, except there is one footnote to history perhaps you could throw some light on. The president, as I recall, in his ^{is}innaguration address mentioned the Alianza para Progreso. Later on the "el" has been put in so that it becomes Alianza para el Progreso which I believe ^{is} at least it has been said...

MOSCOSO: Alianza para Progreso was in the ^{is}innagural speech?

MILLER: Yes, and later, which I understand is not correct Spanish...

MOSCOSO: This was my contribution.

MILLER: This is...

MOSCOSO: Did you ever discuss this with the president?

MOSCOSO: No, no, I just stuck it in there and I said ~~that~~ this is the way it should be ^{is} and no one doubted that I would at least know where to put the prepositions.

MILLER: I thought that this might be a lasting contribution.

END OF TAPE I, PART B

TAPE II

May 25, 1964

MOSCOSO: The meeting held on Saturday, March 3 with President Kennedy is related to the impending, so-called ^{is} Moscoso-Goodwin mission to Chile which left on Sunday, March 4 ^{the fourth} for Santiago. The background ^{is} as follows ^{is}