

Thomas C. Mann Oral History Interview – JFK#1, 03/13/1968
Administrative Information

Creator: Thomas C. Mann
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Biographical Note

Thomas C. Mann (1912-1999) was Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs from 1960-1961 and Ambassador to Mexico from 1961-1963. This interview focuses on the Kennedy administration's policies concerning Latin America and the failed Bay of Pigs invasion, among other topics.

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Thomas C. Mann

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Thomas C. Mann– JFK #1
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Oral History Interview

with

THOMAS C. MANN

March 13, 1968
Washington, D.C.

By Larry J. Hackman

For the John F. Kennedy Library

HACKMAN: Why don't we just *begin*, Ambassador Mann, by having you recall, if you can, when you first met John Kennedy. Or did you know him at all before he became President?

MANN: No, I don't think I ever had the pleasure of meeting him before he became President, except of course, I knew him as most Americans did as a Senator.

HACKMAN: Does anything stand out in your mind, if you can go back to the '60 campaign, as to what your impressions were about the way either of the candidates were discussing the whole area of Latin American problems?

MANN: I don't have a clear memory of that particular campaign. I have an impression that most political campaigns don't, from the Foreign Service officer's point of view, come to grips with the real issues. They are talking in simplistic terms on both sides. I think this is built into our political system, and I suppose it's necessary. I remember there was a great deal of discussion about Cuba.

HACKMAN: Right.

MANN: But I don't remember anything too specific about it.

HACKMAN: You were talking just a little bit earlier about having come over in the very late [Dwight D.] Eisenhower period. What type problems did you face just because this was a transition period between an old and a new administration, let's say between the time of the election and the Inauguration?

MANN: Well, I had been Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs for a good long period. And in those days, and I suppose it's still the case, we expected to be transferred out after about four years in Washington in the State Department. The policy was to rotate between home base and the field. I remember that I was asked to come in and take over the charge of Latin American affairs in the fall of 1960. My understanding was that I would be there only for the transition and would be sent out to the field shortly after the Inauguration in 1961.

HACKMAN: During the transition period, Adolf Berle was working on a task force on Latin America. Not the one that developed after the Inauguration, but it was doing some work for the President. [Richard N.] Goodwin was also beginning to get involved in this whole area. Did you have any contacts with these people before the Inauguration.

MANN: Not to my recollection. I remember talking with most of the members that were on that committee after Inauguration, or after election, perhaps--I'm not sure about that--but certainly not during the time they were deliberating. If I remember rightly they went someplace out of the country, didn't they, to do some of their work? Puerto Rico, perhaps.

HACKMAN: Puerto Rico, I believe it was.

MANN: And I know Lincoln Gordon was on that group. At least I think he was.

HACKMAN: Robert Alexander was working.

MANN: Robert Alexander, Adolf Berle. I think Dick Goodwin. I don't remember whether [Arthur M., Jr.] Schlesinger was on it or not.

HACKMAN: I don't believe he was at that point.

MANN: I talked to them a great deal, all of them that I mentioned, after they had more or less formulated their recommendations.

HACKMAN: After the Inauguration the formal task force, (it was called by some people a task force) was set up with Berle as the head. How did this arrangement work out that you can recall?

MANN: Well, I have a great respect for Adolf Berle. We've been friends for many years. I served under him at the 1945 Conference on War and Peace at Chapultepec, and he'd been Assistant Secretary when I was a junior officer in the Foreign Service and assigned to the Department. I recall having many conversations with Adolf Berle at that time. I think we were in general agreement on most subjects. I had no difficulty in terms of a difference of views, if that's what you're asking about. I never did think it was a good idea to try to divorce operations from policy. I don't think it's very good administration; I don't think they're divisible. But I didn't give a great deal of thought to it at the time because I assumed it was a temporary thing to make a review, which is always good. And I guess if I have, in retrospect, any reservations about it, it is perhaps that they tended to get involved in operations instead of limiting themselves to sort of a policy planning, review type of operation. But that's a detail. I don't remember any great difficulties.

HACKMAN: What types of problems did this present to you, as far as their getting involved in the operational aspects?

MANN: The problem that's always involved is who's responsible and who's making the decisions. And I think it was blurred there for a short while, although I never had the feeling that there was any critical problem involved. It was more a matter of confusion, I think, on the outside rather than so much in the inside. I didn't expect to be there permanently myself. I was there in transition, and I expect that the President would have replaced me, in any case.

HACKMAN: Was there a problem in getting . . .

MANN: I don't know that for sure. No one ever told me that. I just supposed that, mainly because I think it's understandable and even desirable that when you have a change of administration that the new President and the new Secretary of State select his own people, and fresh people with new fresh ideas. I believe in changes in transitions.

HACKMAN: How did it work--let's just stay on this then--how did it work out that you did get the assignment to Mexico?

MANN: Well, I don't know about how that was decided. I was simply told that I was going to be assigned to Mexico just as I had been told every post I've ever been assigned to. I can't even remember who told me or exactly where.

HACKMAN: Had this been a preference of yours, or had you made this known to anyone?

MANN: No. No. In all of my 24 years in the State Department I never expressed a preference for any assignment.

HACKMAN: I was just looking at the book that [Rowland, Jr.] Evans and [Robert D. S.] Novak have written about Johnson, President Johnson, and they talk in there about, or they state, that President Johnson, at that time Vice President Johnson, discussed this with you and was influential in keeping you in the Administration.

MANN: He did discuss with me whether I would go to Mexico, and I suppose he was making up his mind whether he would suggest that. But I have no knowledge beyond that. What he said to anyone else I don't know, or on what basis the President decided this I don't know.

HACKMAN: Going back to the role of the task force, was there a problem in getting this clarified as to what this task force was actually supposed to be doing?

MANN: I never thought it was a great problem because I thought it was a temporary thing, and it's normal in the State Department to do a policy review from time to time. In fact, we have a policy planning staff which is supposed to perpetually do that kind of review. I think as it developed there wasn't any problem because the group ultimately finished its job and ceased to exist and both policy planning and operations were combined in one man. And that's what I would have expected and thought would happen, and that's what did happen.

HACKMAN: One of the things that was being discussed at that time was the possibility of having an under secretary in this area. What was your response to that, your thought at the time?

MANN: I never thought that titles were very important. A lot of people do, and I know Adolf Berle did. My own opinion was that the Latin Americans would not be too impressed with a title; much more important is whether they thought that the assistant secretary, by

whatever name he was called, had the authority or whether they should go to somebody else with their problems and to get their decisions. And I also recognized that if you inflated the title of Assistant Secretary for Latin America, you would have a problem then of whether other countries in other regions would think they were being downgraded, whether you wouldn't have to eventually call everybody an under secretary for a region. I didn't think this would advance things much or hurt things much, either. I never had any strong feelings about it. I just didn't think it was a very useful exercise.

HACKMAN: Some of the people who were working on the task force and working in this area at the time found Mr. Berle just a very difficult personality to deal with as a personality. Did you find this to be so?

MANN: No, I never did. I always got along with him very well, socially and in the office, too. I think he's a very fine public servant.

HACKMAN: Were there regular meetings of the members of this task force, or exactly how did it function?

MANN: Well, you see, I wasn't a member of the task force. I talked to them individually about problems. But I don't think that I ever attended a meeting, at least not that I recall. But one attends so many meetings when you're in that position in government that you can't be sure.

HACKMAN: I've seen so many different explanations of who was involved in this area. I've never seen an official list as to who was . . .

MANN: I think you could get much better answers from people who were on the committee including Adolf Berle. He could tell you all about it, and the other members.

HACKMAN: During this early period, over the transition and during the early days of the Administration, there was also a lot of talk about the role of

the White House staff people in Latin American affairs. Did this create particular problem for you?

MANN: No, not really. I don't remember any discussions of that because the staff really hadn't been formulated by the time I left. I left on April 1, and we're talking about the period from January 20th really to April 1, which is a very short period.

HACKMAN: Well, there was a lot of talk in the press about the role of Goodwin, particularly Goodwin, but also Schlesinger in creating problems with the people in Inter-American Affairs.

MANN: Well, I'm a very outspoken person. If I had had any real difficulties I would have said something about it, and I don't recall that I ever did. As I say, I didn't think it was a good arrangement for the long pull because it was difficult to know where the lines of division of responsibility should be drawn. But I thought this was a temporary thing. And I've really always considered that I had operational responsibility. I just assumed that I did. I think that was what the President intended, the Secretary intended. I didn't pay much attention to the rumors in the press. I never do. I'm not politically oriented very much. I'm more of a professional type.

HACKMAN: I had wondered if you thought the press overplayed this to a great degree? Some people think they did.

MANN: Yes, I think so. I think the press often blows things up a little bit out of proportion, and I suppose that's inevitable, too.

HACKMAN: Do you think that the source of the rumors was at the White House end of the line or at the other end of the line, within the State Department?

MANN: I really don't know. I might say to you that I don't read all of these things that appear in the press to begin with. I don't give them a great deal of importance. I didn't at that time. I didn't really make any attempt to find out exactly what the President had in mind or the Secretary had in mind about running the Bureau in the future. I assumed that I would not be there long, and it simply didn't make any great impression on me. I remember that I. . . .

I do have strong feelings about one thing, and that is that responsibility and authority should go hand in hand. I don't really mind how much responsibility I have, providing I have the authority. But I never liked to have the responsibility without the authority, and I usually balk at that. I have on occasions balked at that. That really never came up that sharply, and I never raised it. I don't say I didn't think about it as a possibility for the future, but nothing ever really happened. I remember working with all of those people on press releases and things of that kind without any real trouble or conflict in the period that I'm talking about.

HACKMAN: As far as this question of operational responsibility, some of the things that were coming out at this time, or some of the rumors, the press reports, said that part of the problem was that Goodwin particularly was talking to Latin American diplomats around town as he was beginning to do some planning in this area.

MANN: I wonder. I remember reading about some of those stories after I was in Mexico, but I don't remember stories of that kind in this time period we're talking about. I want to repeat again that I think we're talking about the period January 20-- wasn't that Inauguration Day . . .

HACKMAN: And your resignation was announced March 31st. And then I think it was the first when you went down there.

MANN: Actually I left the State Department on April the first. I wasn't in the office after April the first. So that's ten days in January, February, and March. We're talking about really seventy days. And that's a very short period of time, especially when a new administration is taking over and shaking down--it takes longer than that really to shake down any administration and get started.

HACKMAN: Let me ask you this. What can you recall about your initial reactions to the whole idea of the Alliance for Progress, that is, as it was being discussed in the early days of the Administration?

MANN: I think we have to define what we mean by "alliance." Again, I'm talking about the period now up to April the first. I had no difficulty at all with the Alliance up to that time because really what came out at Punta del Este, which I suppose is the best definition of the Alliance, was essentially the same program, couched in different language, that was worked out in 1960 at the Act of Bogota where we first gave a social dimension to our cooperative program in Latin America. I helped to formulate that program. I wasn't the chief architect, but I was one of the architects. If I had any trouble with the Alliance it was not in terms of what was in the Act of Bogota or the Punta del Este Charter and Declaration, as it was in the interpretation given those documents by individuals; not by the President or the Secretary, but by other individuals inside the government and outside the government.

I never believed we should compete with the revolutionaries; I never believed we had an agreed definition of the word revolution, what it meant. To a Latin American, I'm convinced that revolution means blood in the streets and shooting. And I think we here in this country refer to nearly everything as a revolution, from the Industrial Revolution on down. President Kennedy said many times that the purpose of the Alliance was to avoid large scale internal disorders, to bring about progress without bloodshed. I certainly agreed with that, and if I had any difficulties it was in the failure to define some of these words that were thrown around with great abandon, as they

always are, without definitions, and the possibility of people misunderstanding what we were talking about. My concern was more in that area.

Land reform, for example, I think is much broader than just taking away one person's land and giving it to other people. I think land reform involves raising the living standard of the farmer, and this includes many, many things, not just land distribution. Land distribution can be in some cases a sound part of an agrarian reform program or a land reform program, but it has to be the right kind of land distribution. I think it should be. And it was in this fuzzy area where I think there was some confusion later on, not so much when I was there, and mainly relating to definitions. I couldn't say for certain how much disagreement there was because none of these words were defined, and at that time I was in the field and didn't have a chance to really talk about these things. I wrote some about it, about the need for definitions. I talked to Ed Martin, I remember, that some of these statements were being interpreted I thought in a way different from what we intended and we ought to begin defining things, being precise about what we wanted done and what we did not think was wise to do.

HACKMAN: In the very early period there was no feeling on your part that people who had worked in this area within the State Department were not sufficiently consulted as this thing was being formulated?

MANN: No. I don't know of any great changes that were made in policy. Again, this is a matter of semantics; it's a matter of emphasis and a matter of rhetoric. Certainly the rhetoric was different, but I'm not one of those that thinks foreign policy takes great changes. I've served under a lot of administrations, and while the emphasis is different, I think the main direction of it is the same.

And as I say, maybe the best proof of that, in my opinion, is the similarity between the Act of Bogota and the Punta del Este Charter, which is about the only thing in writing with precise definitions. I don't see much difference in the two. Now, it's true that they talked about a decade of progress, and there again I think a definition would have been in order. If we meant that we should make a lot of progress in ten years, I would vote for that. If the implication was it was going to solve the problems in ten years I would have said that it's not very realistic. And we used terms like that without definitions, and I think we sometimes raised hopes, unintentionally perhaps, beyond our capabilities of helping them to realize those hopes.

On the other hand, there were many good things that I wholeheartedly agreed with. I think during that time the Kennedy Administration was the first to talk about self-help, the absolute importance of self-help. Certainly the Alliance and the way it was presented by Mr. Kennedy, whom I have a great respect for, gave Latin America a new hope, a lift. I think we can debate whether it was a letdown later on. But I think that's part of leadership, and this is on the plus side on the whole. I think there were many good things about the Latin American policy of Mr. Kennedy. I don't think they were different things. I think it was better salesmanship, better, let's say, language which was more attractive to masses of people and this kind of thing, rather than a change in direction, except to the extent that I've already indicated in this vague area about what we really mean by words.

HACKMAN: Why don't we look a minute at some of these meetings other than the Bay of Pigs meeting? There was one on February 14th. Possibly nothing substantive at all came up--I'm sure it didn't in some of these, the one with Mexico . . .

MANN: Well, I'm sure the inter-parliamentary group called on President Kennedy when I was there. This is the Mexican-U.S. group. I wasn't a principal actor in that. This was set up some time ago. It's been a great success. I imagine this was just a courtesy call, but I can't remember much more than that.

HACKMAN: Probably the same would apply to the next one then, on February 28th.

MANN: Hector David Castro is an old friend of mine, had been here for many, many years. I do remember his leaving. I remember going with him, and I remember the President very graciously received him and said good-bye. But I think that was a routine protocol visit, if I remember it correctly. I don't remember anything of importance discussed, aside from the usual amenities.

HACKMAN: You had a short meeting with the President. Can you remember any meeting with the President when you were alone with him in that period, what this might have been on, what subject?

MANN: No, I don't remember any meeting alone with the President. This indicates I was there only ten minutes, so it couldn't have been very much but ordinary. This presumably was to give him a chance to meet and talk very briefly with people at the Assistant Secretary level, perhaps throughout the State Department or the government. I don't remember.

HACKMAN: Over on the next page then, on March 22nd, a meeting with the Brazilian people. Can you remember what particularly this was about?

MANN: I can't be sure. My memory would be that this was probably about some loans, AID loans, that Walther Horeiva Salles wanted for Brazil. It was either that, I'm sure, or a courtesy call as he was coming through.

HACKMAN: This was in a period, I believe, when Adolf Berle was making a trip to Brazil, and if I can remember there was in the Brazilian press a very negative reaction to the proposals he gave to [Janio] Quadros at that point. Can you remember this figuring in this at all?

MANN: Yes, I do. Very much. I recall Senator Robert Kennedy went down at that time and had a talk with Quadros. I heard more about those talks from Brazilians than I did from our people because I don't have any clear recollection of reading the official dispatches on it. It may be rather fully set out there. But the visit as I've heard it described by Brazilians was a constructive visit. I think Robert Kennedy said some things that needed to be said, and at that time I think we were all concerned about the drift of things there, not only in the economic terms of inflation and that sort of thing, but also in terms of the political drift. I remember that very well. Now this could have well been, and probably was, related to that because Walther Moreira Salles was an ambassador here earlier--I believe twice he was an Ambassador of Brazil here. He's a banker and was their principal negotiator on some of these loans during that time.

HACKMAN: Well, the next meeting then is these three people who had come back from Bolivia.

MANN: I remember that one very well. We decided to send down a mission to Bolivia. We had recognized the MNR [Nationalist Revolutionary Movement] Regime some ten years before. We had put a lot of money into Bolivia, and I didn't think that we had gotten very many results from it. We were concerned about inflation. We were concerned about the Comibol, the government owned mining operation, which was going downhill. The price of tin at that time was fairly low, and they were operating at a large deficit. It was a kind of a state within a state where the miners often defied government authority and were demanding more and more from the budget, and we were subsidizing the budget so that we had a direct interest in that.

We sent down [Seymour] Sy Rubin and Jack Corbett and [Willard] Thorp to have them make some recommendations on what could be done. I remember talking to them, and I remember going by and the President telling them of his concern and what he wanted them to do. They did go and came back with a pretty good report.

HACKMAN: What can you recall about the President's own ideas in this area? Did he have any--was he knowledgeable at all in a problem like this, or was it necessary to do a great deal of explanation?

MANN: I think the President had excellent political instincts. I don't think he had had time to be briefed. I don't think it's fair to expect, during the time we're talking about, to be briefed in depth on the economic, social, and political problems of all of the countries of the world, including Latin America. But he was interested, well informed, and I thought had excellent political instincts about things of this kind, insofar as my knowledge and my contacts with him led me to believe.

HACKMAN: Can you remember if he would make decisions at a meeting like this, or was there a great deal of follow-up on your part necessary?

MANN: Yes. I think in these first sixty days he was so busy getting his Administration organized and he had so many demands on his time that-- he had his own staff in the White House which I'm sure was making suggestions. I think this mission, for example, I think it came from me, but I wouldn't swear to that right now. I'd have to go back and look. The idea came from me. I remember talking with Sy Rubin about it before to see if he was available, and I remember talking to Jack Corbett. I don't remember talking with Willard Thorp, but I probably did, both before and after they went down.

HACKMAN: Then there's a short meeting with Goodwin which again may be hard to pinpoint.

MANN: This could have been on the text of the speech that he made. I'm not sure. I don't remember anything of great substance.

HACKMAN: He had given the Alliance for Progress speech on March 13th, I believe. Can you remember having any particular reaction to that at the time?

MANN: Yes, I was there. I went over the draft, as did, I suppose, fifty or a hundred people. I remember it was very well received in the White House by the diplomatic corps. It was quite an occasion. They were particularly pleased that he was interested in Latin America, as indeed he was.

HACKMAN: There's a meeting then with, at that time, Prime Minister [Pedro J.] Beltran and Ambassador [Fernando] Berckemeyer. Can you remember particularly what came up at this point? I wonder how it came about.

MANN: No, but I don't think it was anything earth shaking.

HACKMAN: It was a fairly long meeting, and I wondered why Beltran was up here at that point.

MANN: I don't know. Beltran is an editor of a newspaper, as you know, and also an old friend of mine. I think I perhaps should remember this. Fernando Berckemeyer, was he still Ambassador then?

HACKMAN: Yes, he was. And what [Theodore C.] Achilles had been down there in what, I guess '59.

MANN: Yes, Achilles had been Ambassador in Lima, and I think at that time was on the Policy Planning staff. I imagine Ted had more to do with that than anybody else. I don't think Beltran was speaking for the government at that time, was he? Do you remember?

HACKMAN: He was Prime Minister.

MANN: He was Prime Minister at that time?

HACKMAN: Prime Minister up until the '62 elections when the. . . .

MANN: Well, I thought he was earlier than that. I don't remember about that.

So many of these calls, nine out of ten calls by Latins on the President, are not to discuss anything of great moment but to get to know him, and if the Prime Minister were here he would naturally want to be able to say that he called on the President. The fact that Beltran--and if he was Prime Minister at that time as you say, and I'm sure he was--Berckemeyer and Ted Achilles were all there, I think suggests that it was more just a get-acquainted meeting. Certainly I don't remember any great issue being decided there.

HACKMAN: James Loeb had just been named Ambassador, and I had wondered if maybe you could remember any reaction on the part of Beltran.

MANN: No, I don't. I think I would have remembered had there been anything, you know, out of the ordinary. But these protocolar meetings are so routine that they don't leap to mind in details unless something comes out. . . .

BEGIN SIDE II TAPE I

HACKMAN: Well, why don't we talk then about the Bay of Pigs a little bit, and you can put down what you want.

MANN: Well, I would like to say just a few things about the Bay of Pigs, in retrospect. I first learned of the plans in the late fall of 1960. It had been pretty well launched at that time, and it was obvious that this was a very important decision. I remember that I talked to people in the Administration and they said, in effect, that the decisions from here on out would be made by the incoming Administration and that nothing much was going to happen until after Inauguration. I remember that I tried to talk to people in the incoming Administration, particularly Dean Rusk, who at that time had a temporary office down in the State Department, and was told by the outgoing Administration and by Dean Rusk that they had an understanding that they would not discuss any pending problems until after Inauguration.

In retrospect, I think that was a mistake because it gave the President very, very little time to really focus on this thing. Now, it may be that he discussed it with other people that I don't know about, but as far as I know, he had no time to really focus on it in depth until before January 20. He may have been briefed. But a briefing and a study of a problem in depth, the study of the options and the pros and the cons, are two very different things. I think this contributed to the confusion that led to the Bay of Pigs.

The real question was whether we would see it through or scrub it, and I don't think that was ever clearly decided. My own opinion is that we sort of fell between the stools on that. It was complicated by other considerations of non-intervention, non-intervention commitments, and other things that clouded the issue. It was complicated further by the fact that the President's Cabinet were, I think, not known to him over a long period of time and on an intimate basis. It takes time to get acquainted with your own Cabinet. I think the main observation I would make is that it's just too bad that we didn't have more time to get decisions before this thing was launched, and I think really that's the main observation I want to make today about that, complicated by the fact that there were divisions within the President's Party and within the Administration on that, too.

HACKMAN: What was your own reaction to the whole idea as it developed?

MANN: Well, I don't want to get into that very much at this time. I'll say this, that there were really two distinct plans. One was--the one that I first saw was aimed at landing a small body of men, I think about a thousand or less than a thousand, on an open beach at high noon. And it was--I remember that I asked how such a small group of men could prevail against an army of the size that [Fidel] Castro had at that time, to be sure, not as big or well equipped as it was later.

It became evident that the success of the plan depended on an uprising of the Cuban people, sort of 1776 style, where everybody grabbed a musket and went out. And I said that I didn't think that that was very realistic. I thought they would go down in the cellar and slam the door when the first shot was fired and come out when the shooting was all over, and objected to it on that ground. They then changed the location of it and essentially changed the character of it.

The plan that was attempted to be carried out involved landing people--about twelve hundred, if I remember correctly--on a beach during the night, really on an island that resembled in many ways what Tenochtitlán must have looked like when Cortez first saw it. It could be only approached by two causeways, with its back to the sea and surrounded by marshland which was not wadeable. The plan in essence was that guns and tanks would be landed in quantities adequate to keep anybody from and equipment from crossing these exposed causeways. They were open and quite long. And it was based on the assumption that we would be able to control the air. We would have complete control of the air. In fact, the island, if one can call it that, itself had an airfield on it, which is one of the reasons they selected it. And that plan I did support as being feasible because it didn't depend initially on any help from the Cuban people themselves.

HACKMAN: Had your feeling on this come from talking to people in the State Department or reading cables or where had this feeling on your part come from, as far as what the response of the Cuban people would be?

MANN: Just my own instinct from having served in the area for many years.

HACKMAN: A lot of people in retrospect have said that if people at a lower level in the State Department would have been consulted that possibility some of the expectations in this direction would have been more thoroughly aired.

MANN: I don't think the plan that was actually attempted to be carried out was based on any--I don't think that made much difference. Now in the original plan it would have been crucial, I think.

HACKMAN: This was the Trinidad Plan, the one that landed.

MANN: I think that was the name of it, yes I was opposed to that one and supported the second plan, the Bay of Pigs location and technique.

HACKMAN: Can you recall what your feeling was about the whole question of air cover and how this came up in the debate on it?

MANN: Well, I think in the many discussions we had on this it was clear that control of the air was of the essence. In fact, the plan called for a standby of our own planes in case anything went wrong with that, and it called for a fairly speedy recognition of a government within a limited period of time after this and then followed by open military support of the new government.

HACKMAN: There were several people who were involved and commented that while General [David W.] Gray, who was doing some of the reviews for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Marine Colonel, [D.W.] Tarwater, I believe, who was working over at the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency], had felt the whole question of air power was crucial but that the Joint Chiefs never emphasized this at the meeting. Some people have chosen to place the blame on the Joint Chiefs for not making this strongly apparent at the discussions of the Bay of Pigs planning. I wondered if you remember feeling that way at all.

MANN: No, I couldn't say whether or not in those meetings--so many things were said over many hours of many meetings that. . . . I don't

have that type of a memory. I remember problems more than what Joe Doe said at a certain time in a certain place. Certainly I would say this, that I understood very clearly what the plan was, and that was in the plan and part of the plan, and I never assumed that it was not an important part of the plan. I thought it was very important at the time. Actually, I asked to be relieved on April 1 because of the feeling that I had that we couldn't get a decision one way or the other. And that's the reason I didn't show up after April the 1st. [Wymberly] Wymb Coerr was made acting, and I wasn't there between April the 1st--when was it--the 17th or 27th?

HACKMAN: It was the 16th and 17th.

MANN: 16th and 17th. So I wasn't there for the full two weeks before, the last two weeks before the Bay of Pigs invasion took place. I attended one meeting after that.

HACKMAN: Well, there's an April 6th meeting and then there was that one April 4th meeting over at the State Department . . .

MANN: That's the one that I recall particularly being in.

HACKMAN: . . . where, I believe, the President went around and asked people what their views were as far as going ahead.

MANN: That's correct. Some people were non-committal, and some opposed, and some supported. And I was one who supported the idea of seeing it through on the grounds that that was probably the last chance that we would have. Once the apparatus fastened onto the island, you would have about the kind of situation that you face today, and you would have to wait a long time for internal decay to set in. In the meantime, you would run the risk of exporting that same kind of revolution to other Latin American countries, in the Caribbean especially.

I must say that I think one of the things that contributed to this was--this is very complicated--was, again, a lack of definition about what was legal and what was not legal: whether non-intervention in effect prohibited us from exercising our inherent right of self-defense; whether Article 51 of the United Nations Charter bore on this; whether, in effect, we had any inherent right of self-defense; and if we did have, in law, whether the facts justified the exercise of that right. Now this is still being debated, and I think it's part of the confusion about Vietnam today and certainly about the Dominican Republic. There are different opinions on that.

I'm writing a book, not about what happened or about people or about countries, but about issues and more about the future than the past, and this is one of the things that I'm pointing out. I think we would have all done, had we been able to, in my opinion, to take a more realistic view of what the capabilities of the UN in dealing with a situation of this kind were and a more realistic view of what international law was, that we could have helped the President on this. It isn't that we didn't have opinions; it's just that we weren't together on it, and I don't think we are today.

HACKMAN: Did you feel those aspects of the problem weren't brought out sufficiently at the discussions that took place on this?

MANN: Well, they were discussed, but problems of this kind really can't be discussed in a meeting with twenty people in depth. Everybody comes in with his point of view, and it's usually not relevant to any single point, so that the conversation sort of slops all over the field. It was a new Administration and different points of view, new people and old people, and they hadn't had a chance to work together. They actually on some things didn't agree, especially on juridical aspects, which loomed very large in this. The State Department never attempted to evaluate the military aspects of it. It wasn't our job.

HACKMAN: I had wondered how you felt about that.

MANN: But the Joint Chiefs said that it was feasible. And I thought that our job and still think that our job was to give advice of a political kind on the consequences, the pros and cons, of not going ahead and going ahead and what would happen if you went ahead (assuming feasibility, assuming we would win), on the one hand, and what would happen if you scrubbed it, on the other hand. That was the way it lined up in my own mind. And then also important were questions of the effect on Latin America, whether or not we were right or wrong, and the effect on world opinion.

In retrospect, I would never again vote for any large clandestine operation because I think that, at least that experience convinced me, that you can't keep anything secret in our society. I just don't think we're set up to engage in that kind of thing. Totalitarian powers can do it and do do it. I guess this is one of the assets or liabilities, depending on one's point of view, of being a democracy. I think certainly the only way we can operate is out in the open, using our own armed forces. But I think we all learned from that. In the past we've had, I gather, successful operations during the Second World War in Europe and other places, and certainly the other side has had a great many successes.

HACKMAN: Well, a lot of people have said, in retrospect, that one of the big things that wasn't brought out was the factor of opinion or the ability to keep from identifying the thing as an American operation.

MANN: Well, I think that was the great weakness, as it developed, when these leaks began to appear. Then it became neither fish nor fowl. You couldn't carry it on as it was intended, as a clandestine, covert operation. Not that it would have been covert very long, but it must have been very difficult for the President to handle questions and divisions within the Administration on legality and other things that surround this issue of overt versus covert.

HACKMAN: How much of a factor was just the fact that these people were in Guatemala and they were being trained and this whole problem of morale and what to do with them if nothing like this was carried off? Was the possibility ever really discussed of what you could do with these people?

MANN: Well, I think the Agency expressed itself as feeling very strongly that there was a time limit beyond which they could not control these people, and the difficulties we would have if it were disbanded (in terms of this becoming public knowledge that we had organized an expedition of that kind and then disbanded it and changed our minds), that was a factor. I don't know how big a factor, because the President asked a lot of questions, but he didn't answer many questions, at least in the meetings that I attended. He was trying to learn about it and to get as many opinions as he could get, and I'm sure he got many that were conflicting.

HACKMAN: At that April 4th meeting at the State Department when people were asked what their opinions were as far as going ahead, did anyone express strong opposition to the operation at that point?

MANN: Yes. The one that I remember most vividly was Senator [J. William] Fulbright.

HACKMAN: Do you think the other people there considered at that point that it was possible that this could be called off?

MANN: Oh, I think everybody understood that it was perfectly possible to call it off. Certain consequences would have flowed from that. I think the real question was not whether we could, but whether on balance it would be wise.

HACKMAN: Did the President ever bring up, or was this ever a subject of discussion, what the domestic political repercussions might be if the operation was called off?

MANN: Not with me.

HACKMAN: Not in any of the meetings?

MANN: Well, not that I recall. I'm sure there were questions about how you handle this and how you handle that and so on.

HACKMAN: I've seen varying reports of what Secretary Rusk's feelings were about the whole thing in this period. Can you recall particularly what reservations he had, if any, or what his feeling was?

MANN: I don't know what his feelings were. Now, that sounds strange because we attended maybe a dozen meetings, most often with the President, but if he ever expressed himself as seeing it through or scrubbing it very clearly, I wasn't aware of it.

HACKMAN: Did this make . . .

MANN: I must say that we're talking about meetings. I would assume that when he and the President met alone, without all of his advisers around, that he did express an opinion. But I don't know that of my own knowledge.

HACKMAN: Did this create difficulties for you at these meetings, because of the Secretary's failure to express a point of view?

MANN: It created uncertainties--I'd use the word uncertainties instead of difficulties--as to what the government line was, what the decision was. I've already said that it bothered me a great deal that we couldn't get a decision on it. It bothered me so much that I went to the Secretary and asked to be relieved of the responsibility and that was precisely the reason, that I felt that I had a responsibility and I didn't know what the policy was and I didn't feel that I could find out what the policy was. I had tried for two months to find out what the policy was and hadn't been

able to do that. And I said that I didn't really want the responsibility in this kind of a confused situation and that I would like to be permitted to get ready--I can't remember when I was told I was going to Mexico, but I must have known at that time--get ready for my new assignment and turn this over (there were so many people around) to somebody who could pull things together. I hadn't been able to.

HACKMAN: Several people have said that during the one meeting, I believe when Secretary Rusk was at the SEATO [Southern Asian Treaty Organization] meetings and Under Secretary [Chester] Bowles replaced him at the meeting, that he felt strong reservations about this. Do you recall him making this feeling apparent?

MANN: No. No. I don't. Maybe I wasn't at the meeting, though.

HACKMAN: I was just wondering how he . . .

MANN: There may have been meetings that I didn't attend. I'm sure there were.

HACKMAN: I think there was only one meeting where you and Under Secretary Bowles were there, but. . . .

MANN: I don't remember Mr. Bowles taking a strong stand on this.

HACKMAN: Were any other positions considered, other than the one as Ambassador to Mexico, that you might move on to at this point?

MANN: I really don't know that. You know, Foreign Service officers take a pride in not politicking for jobs. We think this is a matter of sort of personal integrity. I never really made an attempt to find out. I didn't really care that much about it, where I went. I've always intended to resign on my fiftieth birthday. I guess I was then about forty-seven. I expected to have one more assignment. I didn't have any political

ambition, and it wasn't a matter of great importance to me whether I went to Mexico or to some other place. I didn't want to stay in Washington simply because I thought it was time for a change.

HACKMAN: Moving on to Mexico, then, as a topic, do you have any recollections of the short meeting you had with the President before you went down? It was May 1st, I believe.

MANN: Yes, I--of course, I asked him more or less what he wanted, what line he wanted to follow there and what he wanted me to do. I don't remember him being very specific about it. He talked about his interest in doing what we could to work for better relations between the two countries. I don't remember his being very concrete. Concrete things came up later on during his visit to Mexico and through correspondence, a number of concrete issues. But when you're getting ready to go to a new post, you know, you don't know exactly what you're going to run into. He didn't know, and I didn't know. I think it was just the usual courtesy call.

HACKMAN: Well, at the time you got down there, then, as things developed in the earlier period, what appeared to you would be the major problems that you were going to face and had to work on?

MANN: Well, I always thought that one of the main jobs was to keep the growth rate up at a level which would keep pace with the population growth so that unemployment wouldn't increase. I think one of Mexico's big problems is to raise the living standards of the majority of its people, which are rural. We had a number of problems involving salt water, boundary problems we were trying to solve, and things of that kind. We had a number of problems involving the inter-American family: the October missile crisis and things of that kind that came up while I was there. But mainly it was a matter of trying to help Mexico keep pace with its population and move ahead and progress. And when you say that, then

you're opening up all kinds of things about the various programs we had going on down there. But those are all directed towards that objective: aid and loans of various kinds and trade and things of that kind that take a great deal of one's time.

HACKMAN: As this developed, then, what was your feeling about the way the Alliance, in particular the Alliance for Progress programs worked out in relation to Mexico? How successful were they in this situation?

MANN: Well, Mexico had already had, as you know, a very long and severe revolution. I think more than two million people were killed between 1910 and 1920. And they had had their land reform program. Therefore, Mexico was in many respects different from many Latin American countries. We didn't have any real problem about applying Punta del Este. Mexico had tax reform in the sense of building up a bank of information on tax collections and tax policy reforms and things of this kind to increase their tax revenues, and, as I say, policies on trade and investments and aid, pretty much the whole spectrum.

HACKMAN: Well, you had talked earlier in reference to the Alliance for Progress about the problems of interpretation of various people, as you termed it, "in and out of the government." How did this apply to the Mexican situation and the problems . . .

MANN: It didn't really apply because they'd been through this already. And Mexico, as you know, is very sensitive about anybody intervening in its own internal policies. They're the foremost champions of the nonintervention doctrine and always have been. In fact, that's the cardinal point in their foreign policy. We never had any difficulties about that. I don't think anybody thought we should lecture the Mexicans on land reform. Now we talked about the problems that were residual to the program that had been carried out years before, mainly on how you raise the living standards of the

Mexican farmer above the subsistence level, what needs to be done. I could talk for a couple of hours on that, but that's pretty far from your interest, I imagine.

HACKMAN: What about the operation of this at the Washington end? How did you find [Teodoro] Moscoso to deal with? Did you see any change, well, let's say, from the switch of Fowler Hamilton to Dave Bell at AID [Aid for International Development]? Did this change your position there any?

MANN: No. No, that didn't affect me at all. I must explain this to you. I never considered that I was a part of any clique. I know Fowler Hamilton and like him, and Dave Bell and like him very well. I never had any trouble with Dave Bell. We worked very well together. When I came back later on, back to the State Department, he was in charge of the AID program. We did a great many things on trying to get better coordination between the Foreign Service officer and the AID officer working in the same area and did some innovations there. I always felt that I was a public servant.

I just have to explain to you that the Foreign Service tradition that I adhered to is that the Foreign Service serves the President of the United States, whoever that President is. We're sort of like the Army and Navy, and we're not politicians or partisan in the domestic political sense of that term. I think that's the way the Foreign Service should be, and it's the way I attempted to work. I'm aware of what you're talking about, at least I imagine you're talking about.

I recall when the Republicans came in, everybody in the State Department who held a high position was commonly referred to as a [Harry S] "Truman Democrat," and this was supposed to be a term of something less than approbation. We get used to that. We shrug it off; we don't take it seriously. And then eight years later, well, somebody comes in, and you're an "Eisenhower appointee" and, therefore, you're a reactionary. Eight years before we were all communists, and we're the same people. It's really absurd. So we don't really take that stuff too seriously. Unless we have political ambition (and very few of us do), there's

no reason why we should take it seriously. It doesn't matter that much if somebody wants to call you a Commie in one period of your life or a reactionary the next time, and they couldn't possibly give you a definition of either term. Why should you get excited about that? I never saw any reason to.

HACKMAN: Now when Dave . . .

MANN: I always said what I thought about issues as they came up, what we ought to do about it: "Here's a problem, now what do we do about it?" I was always interested in that kind of discussion. But when you get off into discussions of personalities and who loves the poor more and who had the biggest heart and who is more humane, I think that's kind of childish, and I never paid too much attention to it. I was aware of this swirl going on all the time, but. . . .

HACKMAN: When James Reston was down in December of '62 he wrote a couple of articles, and he said that the embassy in Mexico City felt that the whole AID effort lacked coordination and it lacked realism. I had wondered if this was a result of direct conversation with you or if you had specific instances in relation to what was going on in Mexico, as far as your feelings were concerned?

MANN: Well, I think I was a strong proponent, in those days, of facing up to the need to relate our efforts to the efforts, the self-help efforts of the country itself. Ninety per cent of the capital that goes into development in Latin America is domestic capital. Only about 10 per cent comes from the outside. And I don't think you can talk sensibly about the 10 per cent unless you relate it to the 90 per cent. I became convinced in studying this on the ground--which is one of the advantages of not staying forever in one place, you learn--that we were going to have to take a much more profound approach to aid; namely, study a little more in depth the systems and why the economy was not working, if it wasn't working, and what could be done to make it work better. And this was essentially a matter of systems.

MANN: I talked to nearly everybody, but very quickly. One of the prime requirements, I think, of an Ambassador in Mexico from the United States is to stay out of the press as much as possible because we have such an overwhelming presence there. I tried in every way to work quietly instead of through the papers, but always in a confidential way, never reporting some things up here for fear of a leak about what a Mexican official had said or what I had said.

HACKMAN: There apparently were some changes in, I believe, the spring of '62 and on from that point, as far as the Mexican government policy allowing more private industry and more outside investment. Do you think this was a result of some of your actions, or what were the reasons that brought some of that?

MANN: I don't think primarily my actions. I think it was a result of Mexico's own decisions that its own self-interests would be served by allowing private capital to continue to come in. I don't think more capital came in while I was there than before or after. It may be. I haven't looked at the figures. They did take steps to restrict new investments in certain areas. And the Mexicanization program, which is one of economic nationalism, had been launched--now fairly common throughout the world--had been launched before I got there and was in full swing while I was there. This caused certain problems to certain investors, but those were incidental. I think we were talking mainly about what the problems were and what we should be doing about it and not complaining about this or that detail, although we did talk about some things, when we had to, of a particular kind.

HACKMAN: I would like to get you to talk about your relationship with some of the leading individuals in the government, the President and the Foreign Minister and the Finance Minister.

MANN: Well, you know, I was born right on the Mexican border and learned Spanish before English and I have known Mexico all my life. I spent

vacations in my childhood in Monterrey and Saltillo just because it was cooler, and my family went there for vacations, so that I always had a very special interest in Mexico. I think I understood what my job was there, and as I say, I went about it very quietly. And I suppose because I didn't talk a lot in the press, because I didn't violate confidences--I had a great many friends in the Mexican government and outside the Mexican government. It's a very hospitable place, in any case, for anybody.

And I knew a great many people. It would be hard to give you a list of particular people. But Manuel Tello, the Foreign Minister, I had known him as Ambassador here in Washington when he was Ambassador of Mexico to Washington, and I've admired him for many, many years. I think it's fair to say we were personal friends. The Minister of Hacienda and then Public Credit, Antonio Ortiz Mena, I think is an outstanding public servant, very able. I knew Gustavo Diaz Ordaz, not so well when he was Minister of the Interior in those days, and, of course, the President. I didn't go by the Palace often. I didn't want to embarrass him or expose him to charges of being under the domination of the U.S.A. But I saw him on occasions and had a respect for him. We didn't always agree on everything, but I liked him and I think he liked me. The Minister of Agriculture was one of my closest personal friends. And then a great many people outside of government and in government, too. Everybody in the Foreign Office; we were going all the time.

It's sort of a perpetual campaign if you're Ambassador to Mexico, you know. You work about ten hours a day in the office and go out to three parties every night, seven nights a week, and you tour the countryside and call on state governors and things of that kind, try to get to see the country and the people in the country and at first hand what their problems are, this kind of thing, and think about what you can do to help them.

HACKMAN: There were none of the major figures that you had particular consistent problems with in getting along?

MANN: No. Now this doesn't mean that we agreed on everything. There were disagreements on issues of confiscation of property that was owned by

U.S. citizens. I'm not sure many Americans understand that the Foreign Service has always had a responsibility to protect American lives and property. We can argue about whether we should have that, but we do have it and we're told that we have it, so we try to do our job on that. But again, I, while I spoke rather frankly--I always do--about problems, what I thought about them, I never mixed up the issues with personalities. I practiced law too long for that.

HACKMAN: On the Mexican attitude toward Cuba and the problem of Castro, what was the initial reaction when you went down there and how did this develop? Was there any basic change in those three years?

MANN: No, not really. Like U.S. policy, I don't think Mexican policy changes very much, if you know it in depth. I mean, superficially it may appear to change; but in depth it doesn't, in main direction the main currents don't really change. You can't call Mexico a one party state, but one party's been in power for forty years. The Party itself covers the entire spectrum and the Mexican policy is primarily concerned with keeping the balance between the left and the right. And I have always thought this was a pretty sensible thing to do, instead of polarizing and letting the two extremes go at each other.

On many occasions I have helped Mexico when they got into a position where it appeared that they were "pro-Castro," which they are not, helped them extricate themselves by not forcing things to a vote on something of that kind in an OAS [Organization of American States] meeting unless it were absolutely necessary, or making a statement, if a vote were precipitated, saying that we understood Mexico's position, something of that kind. This didn't mean that we agreed with them, but it simply means that I, at least, think I understand what their problem is.

I never felt, for example, that we should make a great to-do about maintaining this contact by air with Cuba or that we should make a great fuss about the fact that they maintained diplomatic relations with Cuba. I never thought it was that important. This doesn't mean that you would necessarily come to the same conclusion if

you had a different situation—a small, fragile, weak government that you thought might be infiltrated and taken over within six months. Then you might come to a different conclusion, but for a different reason. I guess that's why I've often been called a pragmatist.

HACKMAN: On this problem of Mexico as a passage point for students and other people going to and from Cuba in that period and also as a passage point for shipments of propaganda, et cetera, was this something you were talking to these people with a great deal, or did you feel this was important?

MANN: I would put this in the category of something I should not talk about now or ever. You can assume that I was aware of what was going on and that I didn't think a formal breaking of relations between Mexico and Cuba would have really made any difference in that respect.

HACKMAN: Well, at the time that President Kennedy made his visit in July of '62, from what I know about the meeting or from what I've heard about the meeting, the one aspect of Cuba that came up was this question. I had wondered if you could remember what, in that discussion, took place?

MANN: We often in our meetings with the Foreign Office officially at that level, and this would include the President's talks, express views about the need to control the subversive, the need to prevent Mexico from being a base from which Cuba could subvert other governments and things of this kind. I don't remember in detail.

HACKMAN: How much concern did you feel in the earlier period, and then as the situation developed, over the activities of the former President, General Cardenas, is it?

MANN: Cardenas, yes. Well, I think it's always of concern when Cardenas makes his periodic pilgrimages to Moscow and maintains his contact with elements there. I never believed in giving Communist elements respectability. That's important in Latin America. I always felt, and still feel, that we're not going to convert many hard core Communists, and that if we try to do it and let the bars down and invite them to the Embassy and mix them in with other people that you facilitate their acceptability and that this in itself is dangerous. I felt rather strongly about that. This didn't mean that you didn't treat them with politeness; it just meant that you didn't become identified with them.

I think we have to be identified as in a camp that holds very different views from the Soviet Union and Cuba on many issues. I'm sure that I wasn't very popular with left wing elements and Communist elements in Cuba. I used to get my share of notes about being shot and that sort of thing. I guess everybody does.

HACKMAN: During the period soon after you went down there, before the elections that took place in July of '61, I believe it was, June or July of '61 . . .

MANN: Before you get to that, let me say one thing.

HACKMAN: Okay.

MANN: You asked me about Cardenas. I never thought that the, I want to call them the extreme left wing, which would include the members of the Communist Party, were an immediate threat in Mexico. I thought the government to the center was strong enough to stand up. And this is basic in my own estimate of the situation because from this fact you arrive at certain conclusions that if you didn't believe that you would feel very differently about some things. Certainly a Mexico that is run by a communist government would present, in my opinion, very great problems for us: a two thousand mile frontier, for example. And I think we have a legitimate interest in watching that sort of thing. It's just that

I'm saying that the time may come when this is not true, when the population pressures, the number of unemployed, the satisfaction or lack of leadership, or whatever, may change this.

But in the time that we're talking about I was convinced that the government essentially belonged to the center, it had no intention of being taken over by the left or the right, and that the best course for us in Mexico was to go along with that, under those circumstances as they existed at that time. Now, if you were talking about Guatemala, for example, you have an entirely different situation, an entirely different situation, in my opinion. So I guess the responsive answer to your question is that I didn't consider Cardenas a great threat. He's probably the biggest latifundisto in Mexico, you know, the biggest landowner in Mexico, a very strange person.

HACKMAN: The question I was going to ask earlier was, in mid '61, at the time of the elections, there were articles in the newspapers for which, I believe, eventually the morning or the evening half of that operation Excelsior apologized to the Embassy for. There were accusations that the Embassy was aiding the Catholic Action group, I believe, it was called. I'm sure that's not the proper name for it.

MANN: Yes, I remember. I suppose it was the first week I got there. Some nuns, sisters, came in and saw somebody about something and, as is often the case, I knew nothing about it at the time. I don't remember whether they were working for a charity or whether it was something else, but it was probably not just a pure charity. And I remember the name of the officer on my staff of USIA [United States Information Agency] who talked to them in a way that I thought indicated a partisanship in internal Mexican politics. He was a fine officer. I remember I reprimanded him for that and said we had to be like Caesar's wife, above suspicion on intervention in their internal affairs. I don't even remember the details of that, but it blew over very quickly.

The communist press--they have a very strong press there, as you know, not a big circulation, but there are several of those publications, and if I remember rightly they went after me pretty hard on that. It's coming back to me a little bit. It had to do with Catholic and Protestant to some extent. I'm a Protestant; the President was a Catholic; and I think part of this derived from a fear that we were about to support the Church, if I remember rightly.

HACKMAN: Yes, that was discussed.

MANN: Now it's coming back to me. And I remember one of the senior members of the Mexican intelligentsia, who is a writer, I invited him over to the house and explained to him that I was a Southern Baptist and that we weren't about to either oppose or support the Catholic Church, that that was a matter for them to work out, and assured him that I knew about in the revolution the Catholics supported an army--they were called the Cristedos, or the people who follow Christ. They were defeated in open battle and church properties were taken over, even the temples and so forth.

Then we had another little flare-up on the religious issue by this same group, who were very anti-clerical. They called themselves anti-clerical, not anti-Catholic--they're all Catholics. It's a very strange thing. When President Kennedy came down and wanted to go out and pay a visit to the Basilica of Guadalupe--that's the national shrine of Mexico--and I remember some senators and congressmen bearding me at a dinner and saying that this was intervention in Mexico's internal affairs. I remember answering that this was nonsense, that if the President wanted to go to Mass, to either Guadalupe or any other church, that that was his private, personal business and politics didn't enter into it.

HACKMAN: One other thing in '61 that took place that I just came across this morning was a trip that Goodwin took down and wanted to talk with either Communists or just leftists. Can you remember this? Supposedly there was a disagreement between the two of you over whether he was going to talk to these people or not.

MANN: Well, if I remember rightly, he may have invited somebody to my residence who were members of the Party or were identified very closely with members of the Party. And if my memory is correct--and I hate to trust it on a thing like this; I don't mean to slander anybody--I probably told him that I had no objection if he wanted to go out and meet with these people, that was his business, but not in my house. There were a lot of restaurants and a lot of houses; they could meet somewhere else. That was because I did not believe in giving them respectability, this thing I was talking to you about earlier. I think it's very important. I still do.

HACKMAN: I think the same factor was involved then in something else I had just read this morning. When [Edward H.] Ted Kennedy came down, I believe, in '63 and wanted to do something with . . .

MANN: I'm not sure that that was Ted. Ted called me about this, this piece in the paper. I remember I had a fever and was in bed--in about 1964, I guess--when this came out. And he said he didn't think it was very fair. And I said I didn't either and I didn't know where it came from but I would see what I could do about it. And I called in my staff and laid them low for leaking out that stuff. I was under attack, and I think probably it came from some of my staff. I never did ask. I didn't think I should. I told them not to engage in that kind of stuff again, that was not our business. I liked Ted Kennedy and I wouldn't do anything like that. I don't believe in that kind of stuff.

I think some of the fellows thought that just by the magic of their presence or something of this kind that they could go in and sort of convert these people. Well, I think I know them much better than that, and I think all you do is end up by being used by them. And if they can say, for example, "Why don't you give me a job? Why don't you give me an important job in some sensitive position?"

Why should you trust me, a Mexican, less than Dick Goodwin trusts me?" And this presents a problem. If we're newspaper people or something of that kind, it's a different thing. But for somebody with a high position, either in the State Department or the White House, going around talking to the quote, angry young men, unquote, and thinking he's really accomplishing anything, is whistling Dixie. He's going to be used. I think we were used at times, but I don't think any of this was intentional. I don't draw any conclusions from it, except that it's bad tactics.

HACKMAN: There were . . .

MANN: Now, we're not talking about people who disagree with us, you understand. We're not talking about socialists and--we're talking about people who were anti-U.S., who attacked the U.S. day after day after day, and then who were wined and dined and feted by American officials. I just don't think other people understand that.

HACKMAN: Well, a lot of people have said in retrospect that they found it difficult to convince some of the people at the White House that these type of people were really a problem, that they tended to see everything in terms of social problems, and they didn't see this type of people or Castro or Russian influence in Latin America as really true.

MANN: Well, you know, they're much more sophisticated than we are politically, and they know exactly what to say. I wish I could think of the name of a fellow who received some publicity and notoriety, who was invited up to speak here in the States, speaks about five languages. He grew up in Europe, very well educated, very sophisticated, and he used to write for Holiday magazine and I don't know what else. He would write these stories in English, which, if you know Marxist-Leninist doctrine and really understand what the debate's about, had meaning, but it's very disguised. And then he would write something in Spanish for the Mexican publications. It was a bitter, bitter attack on President Kennedy.

Now, the people who didn't read Spanish and who only went to the lectures in English really didn't understand the fellow at all. An issue came up as to whether he should get a visa. I don't feel strongly about it. I decided he shouldn't. And as long as I was there, he didn't. After I came up here there was a big fuss about it, and finally he got a visa. I have no doubt that, (a), we're not going to change his mind--I've talked to him myself enough to know that--and second, he's going to fool a lot of people. But I guess that's inherent in the process, and I don't worry about it too much. But it's very naïve.

HACKMAN: I think I can remember hearing about that, but I can't remember who it was.

MANN: I can't remember his name. By the time it came up, about the sixth time, I said, "It isn't worth wasting any more time on. Give the guy a visa." And I ordered a visa be given to him on the theory that we had more important things to do.

HACKMAN: As far as President Kennedy's trip, it had first been anticipated that this would take place, I believe, in January of '62. Can you recall why it didn't come off at that point?

MANN: Not unless something came up that interfered with his ability to make it at that time. I don't remember what it was. September, you say?

HACKMAN: It was supposedly going to take place, I believe, in January after the OAS Punta del Este meeting which was going to consider Cuba. He was going to come down afterwards, as I understood it, the first time. But this was called off.

MANN: I would bet dollars to donuts, without looking back to be sure, that something came up that made it impossible for the President to come at that time.

HACKMAN: The talks then that did take place in July of '62, what can you remember about the tone of these things as far as rapport between . . .

MANN: I've never seen anybody make such an impression on the people of another country--anytime, anywhere. The President had a lot of things going for him. He was young, and most of Mexico is young. He was the first Catholic President of the United States, so this whole Catholic crowd looked on this as something of a victory, especially after he went to the Villa. And yet he played it in such a way that he didn't offend the anti-clerical people, in the government especially. He had a light touch and a smile and a wit and charm and a grace, and his speeches were right on what they wanted to hear. Jackie made a beautiful little speech in Spanish that was talked about for weeks. People--tears were coming out of their eyes when she got through. It was a very genuine outpouring of affection for the two of them; as Presidents, of course, but more important, as people.

And the President talked--as he always did, every time I had an occasion to know him after those first two or three months when he really got control of things--forthrightly. He didn't beat around the bush, but he always did it in a way that was not offensive and the Mexicans understand this very well. And they liked him; they were very much impressed with him at all levels inside the government. I remember we talked in particular about the Chamizal, simply because I worked on it for a year after the visit and we got our instructions to start there. We talked about Cuba and about Mexico's relations with Cuba. I remember that. That's two topics.

HACKMAN: Salinity problems.

MANN: We talked about the salinity problem, and it was hot at that time.

HACKMAN: Was anything substantive reached on that at that time?

MANN: No, because really in our system you can't make a commitment on any of these things. The salinity thing involved finding a way to satisfy Arizona and California and New Mexico and do what was right for the Mexicali Valley, too. And we didn't know exactly how we could do this at that time. The Mexicans made a pretty strong point of it, and as I recall, the President said we were going to look into it and do what we can. He told me to get to work. I remember going out to Arizona and talking to some irate people. We had technical legal problems on how a treaty should be interpreted. We had trouble with the Department of Interior in reaching an agreement with them, but it worked out. It took us about two years. I didn't even finish that job. We got it started, though.

HACKMAN: Right. Can you remember at the time the talks that took place between the two Presidents, Senator [Mike] Mansfield, I believe, was brought in to explain some of the political problems that existed in the United States. Can you remember what the Mexican response to this was? I believe Senator [Carl] Hayden was up for election that fall, and this was involved in it.

MANN: In getting. . . . Yes, I do. He was explaining to them his inability just to push a button to solve this problem, that you had to convince the committee that Senator Hayden was chairman of--Senator Hayden was from Arizona. I think they understood that. They wanted to make their case, and they got us working on it. But they were satisfied with the explanations.

HACKMAN: Were the same type of factors discussed in relation to the Chamizal problem with the Texas delegation? Is this the first time that this problem, the burden of solving this, was really placed on you as it developed in the future period, or had you been working on this a great deal before?

MANN: Twelve years ago we came very close to an agreement, twelve years before we negotiated this. I went down to El Paso with Ambassador [Vincente] Sanchez-Gavito.

HACKMAN: [Interruption] You were talking about the earlier attempts on this with Sanchez-Gavito.

MANN: Well, the Mexicans of course have raised this periodically over the years, and this was during [Harry S] Truman's Administration. [Edward G., Jr.] Eddie Miller was Assistant Secretary and I was Deputy, but doing a lot of the work on Mexico and he was doing all the work on Brazil. We sort of divided it up. And I told Vincente that I was willing to give it a try, that I believed we ought to live up to the treaty.

The lawyers said that our objections to the arbitration award were legal and technical. I asked them if they would be willing to submit legal questions to the World Court. And they said no, they didn't think we had a very good case and that we'd lose. I said, "Well, don't you think, then, we ought to try to settle it? If we're wrong, why don't we try to do something about it?" And they said they had no objection.

So, on the strength of that, and after talking with Mr. Miller, I went out with Vicente, and we walked it out on the ground and began to draw some lines. We had a commissioner at that time who was very much opposed and who was influential in El Paso. The Mexicans had an internal problem at that time and dropped it on their own on the ground that it was political suicide in Mexico. I was never told this until years later; but this is what happened. So that the Mexicans just decided not to go ahead with it at that time.

Then after I went down as Ambassador, and before the visit, they raised it again. The same people who were for it twelve years earlier were still there, and the people who were opposed were not longer there. And they said, "Why don't we give it another whirl?" I said, "Well, I'm new here now, and why don't we raise it when the President comes and see what he thinks about it?" And it was raised there. He didn't make any commitments. He couldn't and shouldn't have. But he did say that he was willing to give it a go and see what could be done.

And then I went to work on my own--it was a risky business, I guess--and went to El Paso. And then being a Texan, a fourth generation Texan, I got El Paso lined up first. And then they helped me to line up Austin and the Texas press. And when we got it really going that way, which was the main thing, then our domestic political problems began to be manageable. And it took a long time of hard negotiating to get the deal, but. . . .

HACKMAN: [J.T.] Rutherford was Congressman at that point, I believe . . .

MANN: Rutherford.

HACKMAN: Was he a problem?

MANN: No. He was very helpful. He was defeated shortly after that.

HACKMAN: Right. In 1964, I believe. Was then Vice President [Lyndon Baines] Johnson of any help on this, or did he get involved in this?

MANN: Yes, he was. He was very much interested and, being a Texan, I kept him pretty fully informed, as I did the State Department and the President.

HACKMAN: Did Governor [John] Connally take much of an interest at this point?

MANN: Yes. I went to see Connally in Austin, and he was recovering from an operation, though, and received me at the hospital in his pajamas and said he would give me all the help he could and suggested I see the Attorney General. We had some legal problems about whether Texas had to vote on it first. I remember I got in a plane and found the Attorney General in my home town and talked to him about it, and he said he would help. So it was piece by piece getting everybody lined up, very quietly--and, fortunately, no publicity. I think if we'd had any publicity early in the game we'd have been dead.

HACKMAN: I heard that at the time of the meeting of President Kennedy's visit there was quite a problem in working out of the communique that came out of that meeting. Can you recall this being a problem, getting this worked out?

MANN: Yes. Yes, I do. I think the Mexicans wanted us to agree that the award was valid, and this gave away the ball game. We couldn't, we couldn't agree to that until we knew whether we could reach an agreement.

HACKMAN: It was the Chamizal question, though, that was the central problem.

MANN: Well, and they were talking, too, if my memory's right, about commodity agreements. And these things are . . .

HACKMAN: That's right. That was mentioned, but no commitments were made.

MANN: That's right.

HACKMAN: Who on their side was asserting themselves at this point?

MANN: They always operate solidly as a team at a time like this.

HACKMAN: How was this thing worked out? Was it done between the two Presidents or was it done between you and [Ambassador Antonio Carrillo] Flores?

MANN: I'm sure the two Presidents made the ultimate decision, but we went over this with the Presidents in draft and that sort of thing, little by little. We worked up drafts, I think, before as to what would be in the communique--I'm sure we did. We always do. I'm sure we did this time. It may strike you as strange that I don't remember some of the things that appear routine. I'm sure we had drafts before the visit ever took place of what

the communique would be. If we were doing our job, we should have.

HACKMAN: Were there any subjects that you had hoped would have been brought up at this time that weren't discussed between the two Presidents?

MANN: No. The President was a very easy man to work with. I'll tell you, my main concern about that visit, if you ask me what I was worried about, is not all the things you're asking about. I was worried about . . .

HACKMAN: Let me reverse this.

BEGIN SIDE II TAPE II

MANN: . . . the possibility of an assassination attempt because there are a lot of Spanish republicans, there and all of the bloc embassies have people there and there's always the possibility, not so much of an organized attempt by governments, but I think it's a real risk for the President of the United States, any President, to ever go anywhere in Latin America and ride down among millions of people in an open car. Anybody on a roof top or anything else--you talk to the Secret Service. They came down in months in advance and went over the whole route, as they always do, and they will tell you frankly they can't guarantee to protect the President against one individual who's a nut and who's willing to give his life. And I know we spent more time on security than we did on anything else, on all the rest of it put together. At least I did.

HACKMAN: Did you discuss this with the President at all?

MANN: Oh, yes. I don't know whether this is in the record, but it might be of some interest to you. We got, for example, when the President was out

at Guadalupe--this is memory again. I'm sure it's in the Agency records. But the Agency got a report that there was a Cuban in the crowd of some two or three hundred thousand people, and he had a tick in his eye, and he was armed, and he intended to shoot the President. The President was out, and we knew he would be mixing and mingling with the crowd. I was at the residence. I didn't go out with him on that one. So many things to do, I guess--I don't remember why. And we got word immediately to the Mexican government to look for a guy with a tick in his eye who was a Cuban--you can tell by the accent if you know Spanish whether he's Cuban or Mexican--a Cuban that had a tick in his eye and had a gun. That's all we could tell them. And they did find such a man who was close to the President, and he did have a gun. Now, it's that kind of thing that you never know about that gives you ulcers, you know.

HACKMAN: I certainly hadn't heard about that.

MANN: So, it's things like that that never get out in the papers that we worry about.

HACKMAN: Did you discuss with the President, or bring up with him at the time, any of your views on the overall operation of the Alliance for Progress and the way things were going?

MANN: Not a great deal because we didn't have much time. These visits are frantic. From the time he arrives at the airport the protocol takes over, and he's got to make speeches and listen to speeches and stand up and go on a parade; he has to go visit this and visit that, and he has to attend dinners and give dinners and lunches and visit projects. Really, it's the worst time in the world to have a serious talk about anything. But we talked about the things that were coming up that would be discussed at the meeting, went over the agenda, I'm sure, and went over drafts of what the communique would be. And he approved all of that.

HACKMAN: I had heard that in reference to both the Chamizal problem and to the salinity dispute at that point, that he expressed the fact that in both of these cases the United States had probably been wrong, in effect, in the past. Can you remember this coming up? Was this clearly. . . .

MANN: That was implicit. The willingness to negotiate on both of those things was implicit in there. I can't remember his exact words. Implicit in that was that this was something that merited working on and seeing if we couldn't fix it up, and that meant something was wrong.

HACKMAN: As far as Mexico's--let's see, I guess in '63 they were the fourth country to submit a development plan to go to the "nine wise men." What was your opinion of the plan as it was submitted? Had you spent a great deal of time on this?

MANN: I didn't have really much time by. . . . Was this after--in '64 or '63? Do you remember?

HACKMAN: '63. Just before you left. The three year development plan.

MANN: I'm sure I read it, and I read so many of those things that I don't remember.

HACKMAN: I had just wondered if there was a problem in getting them to get this thing together.

MANN: No. Had it been a problem, I would have remembered it. No, it wasn't.

HACKMAN: Was there any difference, again from your point of view, when Robert Woodward was replaced by [Edwin M.] Ed Martin? Did this make any great difference?

MANN: No. Ed Martin and I--you know, Ed had been my deputy in the Economic Bureau and I brought him over and made him deputy when he was doing economic work in London. He was working in Europe a good deal at that time. And I always got along very well with Ed. I was delighted, if that's what you mean. And Bob Woodward is a very close friend of mine also.

HACKMAN: One thing I wanted to get on was the Cuban missile crisis. You were back at the time, here, at the time that was developing and there later came out talk about the possibility of you being sent as an envoy to Castro. Were you aware of that at the time at all, that this was being talked about? Or when did you find that out?

MANN: This was during the time of the missile crisis?

HACKMAN: Right.

MANN: No, I did not know about that. Maybe I did hear something about it, but I didn't take it seriously. I can tell you what I remember about the missile crisis. I was up on the selection board here in Washington, was called in very late one afternoon, if I remember rightly, called out of the meetings and told that there was a crisis, which I hadn't known up to that minute, that I should leave the boards and go back to Mexico and explain to them what was going on and try to get their support in the Foreign Ministers meeting that took place. And I did that. The President was coming back at that time, the Mexican President, from the Philippines. We had to get in touch with him on the telephone. The Foreign Minister was with him. And the Under Secretary and I had many meetings on it, and he talked to them by long distance telephone in the airplane. And we got their support for that.

HACKMAN: Were you at all surprised at their reaction when you had communicated this to them?

MANN: No, sir.

HACKMAN: Can you remember anything about the reception that Secretary [C. Douglas] Dillon's speech got at the meeting of the OAS Foreign Ministers in Mexico City--the next day, I believe it was, after the President's speech?

MANN: I think it was before, well, it could have been the next day. I was back there. It must have been the next day or the day after. No, I remember Dillon wanted to come back to Washington, wanted to be there and was glad when he could get away. He made a good speech, as he always did. I don't remember anything unusual about it. The whole meeting was charged with tension, of course, because we thought at that time we might be engaged in an exchange of some kind.

HACKMAN: Was the possibility of getting Mexican involvement in the blockade ever approached or considered?

MANN: No. I think I took up with them, first the background and what had happened and tried to convince them that this wasn't a phony: this was for real. We had the copies of the pictures and showed them this. As I say, they're a very sophisticated people. My main concern was that they understand that this was serious business and not a political maneuver and that regardless of what Mexico did, we were going to have to do whatever was necessary to defend the U.S. and we thought that our defense was involved. In my opinion, once they were satisfied of this--that it was a bona fide thing, that we were in danger--I think they understood that we had to act and would act, there was no problem.

We have a lot of problems with Mexico when we call meetings and this kind of thing because of domestic political pressures. The question they put always is, "Why should we create great internal problems for ourselves by pulling your chestnuts? You've got problems

and we've got problems, but we don't think that we're in danger and we don't think that you're in danger." And I understand this kind of talk.

HACKMAN: Well, let me ask you something. After the Bay of Pigs and you had gone down to Mexico, what were your feelings during this whole period as our policy toward Cuba developed? Were you recommending any change in policy, or was this something you would have been involved in at all?

MANN: No. I thought that stronger than ever. After this was over, many Mexicans came to me, in government and out, and they couldn't understand why the U.S. would start something like this and not see it through. They didn't really understand that at all, and they thought we had lost a lot of prestige, not because we did anything, but because we didn't succeed. And that's about the only thing that I heard from what you might call the center of the friends we have there. I think the communists were elated. They thought that, you know, this was, weakness. But this disappeared after October of '62.

There was a period between May of '61 and October of '62 when there was a feeling on the part of people that were not friendly to the U.S. that we had sort of lost our grip and were not going to do anything and were just going to roll over as they took over. And I think that went away after '62. The '62 crisis did us a lot of good in a political sense, not just in terms of removing that immediate danger, but in a political sense because it restored respect for the ability of the U.S. to act in a crisis, in my opinion.

HACKMAN: I had just wondered in the period between April of '61 and October of '62 when the missile crisis took place, I know that within the Administration there was a lot of time and study given to the possibility of formulating some action in regard to Cuba.

MANN: I never really gave that much thought. We failed that time to get rid of Castro, and as I said earlier, I think he's there for a good long while. I didn't think the American people or the hemisphere were prepared at that time for an invasion, and as time went on this became more and more costly. We couldn't have done anything in early '61. I don't think it was politically possible for us to do it. We were very divided.

And then by the time we might have been able to make a reassessment if we had wanted to, I think it was too late because it would have been a very bloody operation by the time the Russian tanks got there. And they became--they had the second largest armed forces in the continent, I guess after Canada and the U.S.--let's say, the third largest. They had all kinds of things, including defensive missiles. So that I never imagined that, never thought that it would be in our interest to spill that much blood. I thought it was prudent to wait and see what would be necessary. I agreed with what we did in the missile crisis. And my feeling is still the same way. I wouldn't vote for an invasion of Cuba tomorrow. I don't think it makes much sense right now. So I never did pursue the matter anymore.

HACKMAN: In June of '63 there were rumors, at least in the newspapers, that you planned to retire and go back into law practice in El Paso, I believe.

MANN: Yes, that shows you how accurate some of this stuff is. My home town is Laredo; they meant to say Laredo, I guess. Well, you know this was a strange thing. I practiced law for eight years before I came into the Service, and I told hundreds of people that I didn't want to stay in the Foreign Service forever, for a number of reasons. I thought when people had served twenty years or so they ought to get out and make room for the younger people. Secondly, my health was bad; I was tired of the grind; and thirdly, I'd been over this ground so many times that I wanted a change.

Now this was formulated long before Mr. Kennedy came on to the scene; it had nothing to do with Mr. Kennedy. And on my fiftieth birthday I did write to somebody in the White House staff--I forget who it was, maybe Ralph Dungan or somebody--and said that I was ready to go. I didn't want to create any problems for the President or anybody else, but at a convenient time I would like to retire, both as Ambassador and from the Service. And the upshot of it was, as I remember, that they said, "Well, all right; but why not stick it out till after elections?" And then that time never came, and the President was assassinated. Mr. Johnson called me up and I didn't have much choice, and it took me three and a half years to retire.

HACKMAN: . . . to get out again.

MANN: This set me back three and a half years from what had been my original plan. But I don't mind that either. I would have stayed if the President said, "You're needed." I didn't think I was particularly needed, and I thought it was a new era, and I really didn't want to debate with people about whether I was liberal or conservative or something else. I was sort of bored with it.

HACKMAN: Those are all the questions I have unless you can think of either some specifics we've left out or some of your general impressions about the. . . .

MANN: Well, you know, I don't know that anybody ought to give an impression about another person. But I'll say this about President Kennedy, I always had a very high respect for--for him as a man and as a President. I never thought that I could speak for the President, and I doubt very much that some of the people who were speaking for him really had much more right to do it than I had. I simply want to say that I think he did a fine job as President. It's the toughest job in the world. You're the head of the Party and the leader of the nation at the same time, and

the job of reconciling all these conflicting currents and opinions is an enormous job. And I don't think the American people really understand it very well.

I am reminded of what Sam Rayburn said to me when I was a young man. I went up to pay my respects, and he said, "Young fellow, you may wonder why the U.S. government doesn't function better than it does, more efficiently than it does. And all I can tell you is that after you've been around a while, you'll wonder how it works as well as it does." And I've never understood why people, so many people, criticize presidents, but they have in our history, as you know, from the time of George Washington. And I think a lot of it is misguided. It was a great tragedy when the President was killed. I think he was--he had learned so much, and he had such youth and vigor that I think he was on the verge. . . . I don't think he would have escaped without criticism or anything, but I think he was just beginning his job, really.

HACKMAN: Could you see signs toward the end or in the last year that any of the, possibly the naive or the lack of realism on the whole approach to Latin America was changing on the part of the Administration?

MANN: Yes, I do. I think the President was learning very fast, as I think any intelligent man hopefully always does, about a lot of things. I was impressed with the growing, what appeared to me from a distance--I'm not saying that I am speaking for him or giving even anything more than my impression--what appeared to me from my limited contacts with him, a growing realization of what the world is really like and what we ought to do to survive and to prosper in it.

I was impressed with many things, for example, his speech on rejecting the better red than dead theory. I thought that was a powerful speech. And I know that the President did a lot of his own speech writing. He didn't prepare the first draft, but he made a hell of a lot of changes in them. I've seen drafts that went to him, and I've seen the changes with his own handwriting in them.

I always considered, rightly or wrongly, that he belonged pretty much in the center. I don't think he was an extremist, and I don't think he was naive. I think he was an idealist, but an idealist who had the common sense to try to understand what had to be done in order to achieve ideals. You can't just float off on cloud nine.

I have no idea what his feelings were towards me, and I don't think that's very important. I don't think he knew me very well, and I'm sure I didn't know him as well as I would have liked to. But I have nothing but respect for the man and for the job that he did.

The only mistake I think he made was in the Bay of Pigs; the only mistake that I'm aware of that he made was in the Bay of Pigs. And I think that was largely because he didn't have time. It was really unfair to the man to ask him to make that decision, which involved so many considerations, in such a short span of time. And in looking back on it, I would say that if there was an error, the first error was in not going right to work--I hope that never happens again in our country--in not going right to work the day after election day to get ready because you have this time between election day and Inauguration day. The world moves so fast now, we may again find that our President doesn't have time after January 20 to start making these decisions that shouldn't be made off the cuff.

HACKMAN: Let me ask you one other thing. You were the Assistant Secretary in this area in the preceding and in the following administrations. There was a lot of talk, particularly in the early days of the Kennedy Administration, about the effect on the morale of all the people working in the Foreign Service in this area and in the State Department because of Goodwin's role and Berle's operation, the appointment of ambassadors from out of the Service and things like this. Did you think this was important?

MANN: No, not really. I never have been one of the hand wringers on bad morale. I think you have good morale, in my experience, if a staff feels that it's accomplishing something. I don't think the pay they receive or the kind of post they're

assigned to is very important. And you can have the worst morale when people know deep in their hearts that they're not really accomplishing anything worthwhile. Now, I really don't sympathize with people who expect security, absolute security in life, and this is really what most people want. And when you have a change in administration, I guess there are people who worry about how this is going to affect their careers. And I think that's where most of this talk springs from. But I don't think we should take that too seriously either. That's human nature.

I was only in government twenty-four years, and I'm in an organization now, and I don't remember a single post or a single assignment where I didn't hear a lot of talk about bad morale. I think these are the people that are not very self-confident, now very secure, don't feel secure. What they're really mainly saying is, "What's in it for me," and, mainly, "This fellow doesn't love me." I don't think that is something that really is very important, either. This is like some of the newspaper noise you read. The main thing is what are the issues and what really should we be doing about them. That's the ball game, and the rest of the stuff I never paid much attention to.

I used to tell my own staff, I always complained to my own staff, "Morale in Mexico is bad. But why is it bad? What can I do besides holding hands?" "Well, some of the younger officers think that they're not being consulted on everything that's going on." I said, "Well, I guess it's against the rules, all the security rules. But they're Foreign Service officers. You tell them that they can come up to the office here and read every outgoing telegram and every outgoing message, and if they have any opinions to please come in and tell me about them." And I think we had about six at that time. We tried this as an experiment. We had about six people there. Their morale was bad because they were left out of the mainstreams. So we brought them right into the main stream, not in terms of action, but in terms of what was going on. And I asked the fellows, I said, "Now, keep a count. I want to know how many of the six show

up every day for thirty days." And at the beginning of the thirty day period--they all started reading--at the end of the thirty day period only one was there.

HACKMAN: In terms of the operation of the embassy, maybe you can recall this. It was in, I believe it was May or June of '61, this directive went out from the President to all the Ambassadors about . . .

MANN: Yes. I remember that order very well.

HACKMAN: . . . the country team approach and coordinating the efforts of all the agencies in a country. Did this have any effect on the way you operated at all?

MANN: No, it did not, because I always assumed that an Ambassador was responsible to the Secretary and the President for the conduct of relations with that country and he couldn't really delegate that responsibility. I always have operated that way. We had a staff meeting every morning of all the senior officers in the Embassy: military and intelligence community and everybody, political, economic--I don't think we invited the consular people in. And we met there and decided most questions in those meetings. They were about half an hour to forty-five minutes every morning, and we had perfect coordination.

I remember a General, one that seemed to be in doubt as to who was running the Embassy, and I said, "Well, we can find out." I was willing to find out. Either he would go or I would go. And he said he didn't want to find out, and I said, "Well, let's just drop the subject then." If you have somebody who is insecure and he doesn't know exactly what he believes in, he's not going to lead no matter how many letters he gets. And if you have somebody who at least has a conviction, he doesn't really need a letter of that kind.

I don't know how anybody can cure this problem. But one of the weaknesses, I think, of the Foreign Service is that we don't assume enough responsibility. We tend to pass the buck too much. Maybe it's something we do to these younger officers. Maybe we try to put them into a mold too early or something. We get them, bright, young people out of college, and by ten years--they quit reading; they quit thinking; they quit debating; and they just seem to drift with the tide. I think this is a real problem. And I'm sure I don't have the answer. It's involved in the selection system and how we select people for promotion. I expect we wait too long to. . . . I think we keep them much too long.

I'd like to see us retire people with dignity at, let's say, 50, 52, or 53, 54 years of age and make room for the younger people coming up, and you have a constant turnover. I understand we've got bad morale in State, in Foreign Service now because we've got two or three hundred senior people without jobs, I mean really responsible work. I really don't think the problem comes from outside the Service. I think inside the Service we've got to find a way to get more initiative, more dissent, more conflict, and, above all, less fear that if you do dissent and you're wrong, that you're going to starve to death, together with your family. Now, how you get this kind of a spirit of dissent and debate I don't know. But we don't have it. And that's the problem, not the problem of not being backed up by the President. Nobody's going to be backed up if he's wrong, and if he's right he's going to get plenty of support. So you have to decide whether you know whether you're right or wrong and whether you think you know whether you're right or wrong.

HACKMAN: Well, that's all I have.