

Robert F. Woodward Oral History Interview –JFK #1, 1/8/1970
Administrative Information

Creator: Robert F. Woodward
Interviewer: Dennis J. O'Brien
Date of Interview: January 8, 1970
Place of Interview: Washington, D.C.
Length: 26 pp.

Biographical Note

Woodward, Robert F.; Ambassador to Chile (1961); Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (1961-1962); Ambassador to Spain (1962-1965). Woodward discusses his involvement with Latin American affairs, specifically noting situations involving the Dominican Republic, Cuba, and Colombia, among other issues.

Access Restrictions

No restrictions.

Usage Restrictions

According to the deed of gift signed January 8, 1991, copyright of these materials has been assigned to the United States Government. Users of these materials are advised to determine the copyright status of any document from which they wish to publish.

Copyright

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specified conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be "used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research." If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excesses of "fair use," that user may be liable for copyright infringement. This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law. The copyright law extends its protection to unpublished works from the moment of creation in a tangible form. Direct your questions concerning copyright to the reference staff.

Transcript of Oral History Interview

These electronic documents were created from transcripts available in the research room of the John F. Kennedy Library. The transcripts were scanned using optical character recognition and the resulting text files were proofread against the original transcripts. Some formatting changes were made. Page numbers are noted where they would have occurred at the bottoms of the pages of the original transcripts. If researchers have any concerns about accuracy, they are encouraged to visit the library and consult the transcripts and the interview recordings.

Suggested Citation

Robert F. Woodward, recorded interview by Dennis J. O'Brien, January 8, 1970, (page number), John F. Kennedy Oral History Program.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION
JOHN F. KENNEDY LIBRARY

Legal Agreement Pertaining to the Oral History Interviews of
Robert Woodward

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44, United States Code, and subject to the terms and conditions hereinafter set forth, I, Robert Woodward, do hereby give, donate, and convey to the United States of America all my rights, title, and interest in the tape recording and transcript of personal interviews conducted on January 8, 1970 at Washington, DC and prepared for deposit in the John F. Kennedy Library. This assignment is subject to the following terms and conditions:

(1) The transcript shall be made available for use by researchers as soon as it has been deposited in the John F. Kennedy Library.

(2) The tape recording shall be made available to those researchers who have access to the transcript.

(3) I hereby assign to the United States Government all copyright I may have in the interview transcript and tape.

(4) Copies of the transcript and the tape recording may be provided by the Library to researchers upon request.

(5) Copies of the transcript and tape recording may be deposited in or loaned to institutions other than the John F. Kennedy Library.

Robert Woodward
Donor

November 24, 1990
Date

[Signature]
Archivist of the United States

Jan 1, 1991
Date

Robert F. Woodward

Table of Contents

<u>Page</u>	<u>Topic</u>
1	Woodward's position as the Ambassador to Chile
3, 5, 11	Alliance for Progress program and meetings
4, 11, 20	Woodward as Assistant Secretary of Latin American Affairs
6, 20	Bay of Pigs Invasion (April 1961) and latter meetings with the Colombian government
6, 17	The Dominican Republic after the death of their dictator, Rafael Leonidas Trujillo y Molina
8	John F. Kennedy's [JFK] trip to Venezuela, Colombia, and Puerto Rico, 1961
9, 16	Woodward's conversations with JFK
12	Coffee production, demand, and negotiating a coffee agreement
15	JFK's meeting with the president of Argentina, Arturo Frondizi
19, 24	Cuba
21	Negotiating the Colombian resolution

Oral History Interview

with

ROBERT F. WOODWARD

January 8, 1970
Washington D.C.

By Dennis J. O'Brien

For the John F. Kennedy Library

O'BRIEN: Okay.

WOODWARD: Well, as I said, there were only a few occasions on which I had a real personal relationship with President Kennedy, but years afterward I realized that I had enjoyed a rather remarkable experience in certain of these episodes. When he first came into the office I was in Uruguay. Shortly after the inauguration I received a telegram asking me to take an administrative position in the State Department. This disappointed me, because I had been looking forward to taking part in relations with Latin America with the new administration. I had been Chief of Foreign Service Personnel before, and I pointed out that I had signed the notices to hundreds of employees telling them that their jobs had been eliminated during a reduction in force at the beginning of the Eisenhower [Dwight D. Eisenhower] Administration, and that I would not be very popular in an administrative personnel position. I then waited to see what the reaction would be. Much to my surprise, my reasons were accepted, and I was offered a transfer to the position of Ambassador to Chile. Well, that was an extremely interesting prospect for me. I came home promptly from Uruguay and got ready quickly to go to Chile.

Certain complications arose. I was asked if I would postpone my departure for a couple of weeks and go to Caracas as the chief of an United State Delegation to a meeting of the Economic Commission for Latin America. I said I would be glad to do that, but that I'd

like to have a little more time afterward, a week or two, to get ready to go to Chile. Well, this was arranged. Suddenly, the Venezuelans said that they couldn't have this conference in Caracas because there would be a Cuban delegate (because the Cubans were members, and still are, of the Economic COMmission for Latin America, a U.N. organization, a part of the Economic and Social Council) -- and therefore the secretariat of the organization urgently had to find another city for the meeting. In view of the

[-1 -]

short time for preparation, the natural alternative for them was to have it in the city where they have their own headquarters, which is Santiago, Chile. Then I was asked if I would prefer not do to this special job since I was going to be accredited to Chile and it might complicate my affairs. Another person was mentioned as a possible candidate to do the job on the conference. I knew that any other person would probably cause me more work than I would have to undertake myself if I were head of the delegation I would be trying to help him and arranging gatherings for him. Therefore, I might as well be doing this myself and doing it in my own way and without feeling under pressure of cooperating with another ambassador.

So, the morning after I arrived in Chile I presented my credentials as head of the delegation at the conference. I then quickly mentioned to the Chilean foreign minister, on whom I made a call, that there would be certain protocol complications in my having all sorts of relationships with cabinet ministers -- the minister of the economy, the minister of finance and others -- and might it not be possible for me to present my credentials rapidly and get myself squared away? He said, "Of course, just come over tomorrow morning; I'll arrange for you to see President Alessandri [Jorge Alessandri Rodriguez]."

Here begins something of special interest in relation to the Kennedy Administration and Latin America. President Alessandri is a member of the Liberal Party of Chile. The Liberal Party is a conservative party, but as differentiated from the party of that name, it is the non-Catholic conservative party. President Alessandri was a very conscientious chief magistrate of his country. In his own way, as a businessman -- (he had been head of a large company in Chile) -- he was extremely anxious to do anything he could to improve the economic and social conditions of his country. It was obvious that there were many very serious economic and social problems. He explained to me in our conversation, which was an hour and a half or so, what he was trying to do and what he conceived some of his problems to be. He explained how limited the resources of the country were for trying to, for example construct low-cost housing and provide all the things that were badly needed by the people who were, in many cases poverty-stricken and living on a substance or marginal basis.

I said, for example, that he had so organized the affairs of the government that permits were not issued for the construction of any luxury dwelling. He had decided that the country would not begin with the use of television because he conceived of people spending their money on television because he conceived of people spending their money on television sets, not to mention the investments in the broadcasting stations. He wanted to try to do everything he could to discourage luxury expenditures and to make it easier to buy.

[-2 -]

necessary to the substantial improvement of the country. Naturally, this didn't mean that he had been totally successful in doing this, despite the limitations he placed on luxury expenditures. But he was trying to do this, and it was certainly true that his resources were very limited.

Then he said, "Your President is talking about establishing goals for human betterment, he's talking about an 'Alliance for Progress.' and a meeting to discuss this is scheduled for this coming August." This was then the beginning of May, the tenth or twelfth of May. He said, "This is creating expectations amongst these people whom I'm doing my utmost to try to help. It will create mounting expectations." He said, "Who's going to pay the bill?" He said, "Is your government going to pay the bill?" He was earnest in this approach and he was extremely disturbed about the gap that was going to develop between expectations and the realization of the expectations. He made quite an impression on me, but I nevertheless, was still enthusiastic about the prospective Alliance for Progress.

The conference of the Economic Commission was completed inside of ten days. Almost immediately a group was coming, (from about June 15, from Washington to engage in preparatory conversations with the Chileans for the conference on the Alliance for Progress that was going to be held at Punta del Este in Uruguay. So I proceed to do my utmost to get acquainted with the people in various lines of work that would be related to the goals of the Alliance for Progress, many of whom, of course, I had fortunately already met in the course of the conference of the Economic Commission. I was, I think, quite successful in getting rather widely acquainted with the people who were interested in housing, in education, in agriculture, in public health, in all of the things that were going to be part of the goals, so that I would be able to get the people who were obviously the key people together with the members of the mission coming from Washington.

The mission came. It was headed by Adlai Stevenson, and Lincoln Gordon was a member of it. Ellis Briggs came with them as an advisor. Then there were three or four young men from the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs and the office of the Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs. There were series of meetings which I think gave a pretty complete coverage to the personnel in Chile who were going to be key people working toward these goals. Everything went off quite well. There were no further discussion along the line that President Alessandri had mentioned except that, when he gave an audience to Ambassador Stevenson, with Ellis Briggs and myself present, he again emphasized his concern that expectations might be raised way beyond the ability of the governments together, or the willingness of the United States, to finance measures that would satisfy the aspirations.

The mission left, and there was a unique little juxtaposition of circumstances. I remember, just as I walked away from the airplane,

[-3 -]

having said goodbye to the mission which was then going to La Paz, Bolivia; I began to feel ill, but I tried to ignore this. That morning, at 11:30, the minister of the army of Chile was going to give a decoration to the Chief of the United States Army Mission, who was leaving

the country. It was a sentimental ceremonial occasion, and I felt I had to attend. But had to excuse myself as soon as the Minister got through reading the citation because I was so sick. Also, that noon, I had been invited to lunch at a small naval club in Santiago by the Press Attache of the Embassy to meet some newspapermen. I was not only appreciative of the efforts of the Press Attache to try to help me get acquainted, but I wanted to meet these newspapermen. So, although I was in no condition to go, I went to the luncheon. I mention all this tiresome detail because as I sat down and started to eat a plate of cold shrimp the waiter came to me and said, "There's a telephone call for you." He led me down a dark corridor to a phone on the wall. The Secretary of State was calling me from Washington in this obscure place in downtown Santiago.

I had known the Secretary when he was Assistant Secretary years before, and I said, "Well, Dean [Dean Rusk] I guess you're interested in knowing how the Stevenson mission went." I said, "It went off, I think, very well and they're on their way to La Paz." He said, "No, I didn't call you for that reason." He said, "I want you to come back to Washington." It took me a few seconds to absorb this idea, and I said, "I guess I know what you mean, and I think you're scraping the bottom of the barrel." I knew that it was the job of Assistant Secretary for Latin American Affairs, and they apparently had to struggle to find someone for it after the Bay of Pigs incident. But I said, "Well, I guess I better consult my wife," in a jocular way, you know, because naturally I couldn't refuse it. He said, "Well, call me back in the afternoon."

At this point, I went back and struggled through the luncheon. I went home immediately after and was so sick I went to bed. After I lay there for 15 or 20 minutes, the telephone rang again, and it was long-distance. I thought, "My goodness, it's another call from Washington." No, it was Jim Loeb [James Loeb], the Ambassador to Peru, calling me from Lima. And he said, "Say, Bob, the Stevenson mission is coming in here tomorrow, or the day after tomorrow. What did you do about them? What would you suggest that I do?" I outlined quickly what we'd done. He said, "Well, I think I'll try to do some of the same things here." This surprised me because I had been working on this idea for almost a month, trying to get acquainted with everybody that could help on the same thing.

Well, anyhow, it seems that unbeknownst to me, the afternoon before, Stevenson, Gordon -- and Schlesinger [Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.] (who was in this group too) -- had some conversations on the telephone from

[-4-]

their hotel room, with Washington. Evidently they had discussed me as the position of Assistant Secretary. I think that all the preparations I made for their meetings in Chile were a factor and that they said they thought that probably I would be acceptable.

O'BRIEN: Did you have any advanced feelers on this or any suspicions at all?

WOODWARD: Not a thing. Absolutely nothing. There had been a previous occasion, a previous factor that I recognized in retrospect. A year or so before....

Well, some months before the National Convention at which President Kennedy was nominated, Stevenson made a trip around Latin America in the company of William Benton and a couple of others. It was a personal trip. As a result of our conversation during the time he was there, he asked me if I would mind jotting down some of my ideas about things that could be done for the improvement of relations in Latin America. United States relations with Latin America. He was leaving early in the morning. He went to bed -- and I sat down at the typewriter. While he was in the bedroom nearby, sleeping, I typed out a long list of very short items of all the things that occurred to me as things that would be interesting projects to look into. He took this piece of paper along with him when he went back to Washington. I think this may have had something to do with his feeling that I had a lot of ideas that might contribute to carrying out the job of Assistant Secretary.

Well, in any event, the upshot of this was that after the conversation with Loeb, I called my wife. She had gone to the first bridge game that she had undertaken in Chile, and she told me I spoiled her hand. She had just picked up a damn good hand. When I called up the State Department, I was connected with Chester Bowles. He started to give me a sales talk about coming up to Washington. I said, "Chet, you don't have to sell me on this. Dean Rusk already talked to me this morning about it." He said, "Oh, I didn't know. Either one or the other of us was going to get in touch with you." "Naturally," I said, "I'm coming." He said, "Well, you can rest assured that if this quick transfer after having been in Chile only a few weeks costs you anything extra and so forth, we'll try to make some arrangements to square it with you." He said, "You won't have to hold the job very long if you don't want to, six months or so." Well, anyhow, I went along, and arrived on the eighth of July.

Now, at this time, three of the most important events in Latin America in the Kennedy Administration had already been decided. They were events, in some cases, in which the United States had an element of responsibility, and in other cases you could say they were circumstances which required some kind of response on the part of the United States. In the first place, the idea of the Alliance for Progress was already decided upon, and the outlines of the goals had already been

[-5 -]

prepared. John Leddy in the State Department had had a great deal to do with this. Only a few days after I assumed my duties as Assistant Secretary on the eighth of July - the tenth of July, I believe John and I went together to a meeting to which we had invited the Ambassadors of all the American republics, all the Ambassadors in Washington. We had a discussion with them about the goals that might be adopted by the conference that was scheduled for August. John handled all the substance of discussion. I introduced him. He had a very well prepared list of ideas which, in effect, turned out to be virtually the framework of what was agreed upon by twenty countries in Punta del Este in August. This was all in fairly solid shape before I ever got to Washington.

The second thing was, of course, that the Bay of Pigs incident had occurred in April. Just after that event, President Lleras Camargo [Alberto Lleras Camargo] of Columbia had some discussions with Adolf Berle. They had discussed the possibility or the advisability of trying to have a meeting of the American republics Foreign Ministers which would establish

some new principles or doctrines which would help the countries as a whole meet the situation of a communist inclined country or a communist country in their midst. The Columbia officials had, as I understood it, assured Mr. Berle that they could do preparatory work and work up the kind of resolutions that they thought would be acceptable to the other American republics, that this would be done by a group of Latin American countries, and that the United States would not be in the position of trying to persuade the other American republics to take steps or agree to any kind of doctrine in the aftermath of the Bay of Pigs. I, therefore, was in the position, as Assistant Secretary, of waiting expectantly for the ideas that were going to come forth from the Columbian government. I had frequent conversations with the Columbian ambassador in Washington. As time went on, his foreign minister came up to Washington a couple of times. I mention this because of comments I am going to make later about this meeting.

Now the third thing that turned out to be a very important event was the death of Trujillo [Rafael Leonidas Trujillo y Molina], the dictator of the Dominican Republic, which had occurred sometime along the end of May, only five or six weeks before I came in. His son (who was recently killed in an automobile accident in Spain) was governing the country. It wasn't clear to the government of the other countries in the hemisphere whether the government of the son was going to degenerate into the repressive type of dictatorship that Trujillo's was considered to have or whether he was going to be disposed to try to bring in elements that had been opposed to his father's administration to make the government more representative and more democratic.

There were a great many discussion between Ramfis Trujillo [Rafael Leonidas Trujillo, Jr.] and our charge d'affaires, John Hill [John C. Hill, Jr.], who had very close working relationships with all the significant

[-6-]

elements in the Dominican Republic. He did what we thought was quite a remarkable job there in trying to explore ways in which the United States could be of any assistance and encouragement to their making the government more representative. Former Ambassador Murphy [Robert Murphy] went down there at the request of President Kennedy to explore this possibility.

President Kennedy was very much interested in the situation there. In the first conversation I had with him after I reported for duty in Washington, on about the ninth or tenth of July the topic which he discussed with me at most length was the situation in the Dominican Republic. At the end of our conversation, he called in Dick Goodwin [Richard N. Goodwin], and we continued with a conversation between the three of us. President Kennedy had told me that I should be aware of the fact that I was in charge of Latin American affairs. Then, when he called in Dick Goodwin he said, "Of course, you'll be in constant contact with Dick and Dick's over here...." I can't quote him exactly but the idea was that we'd be working very closely together and that Dick was right there beside him, as it were. I mention this because, as time went on, it was clear that Dick had many, many ideas, and some of them were good ideas. I think that we had a very good relationship of give and take. I'd tell him if I thought his ideas were not practical. And when he had a good idea, I think I was the first to

applaud it and make use of the fact that he had such a close relationship with the President to try to carry out the idea.

Now, one of the first things that he mentioned to me, another thing that had been decided on, was that the first Presidential visit of a President from Latin America was going to take place. I think it took place actually in the first part of September.

O'BRIEN: Was that Prado [Manuel Prado]?

WOODWARD: President Prado of Peru. I remember saying to Dick when this came up, I said, "President Prado is undoubtedly a very fine man, and he's governing his country, according to the system that prevails in Peru, very well. But since the Kennedy Administration has placed such emphasis upon the whole idea of trying to better the condition of the common man, I would have thought that the idea might have developed of inviting a president from a country which had demonstrated most outstandingly its efforts, and successful efforts, to try to improve the condition of the entire population of the country and particularly those who need it the most. "Naturally, I'm elaborating this a bit to clarify my rationale." I said, "President Betancourt [Romulo Betancourt] of Venezuela, it seems to me, is doing as much as any other president in the Hemisphere to try to raise the level of living of the people of his country in a systematic way through education, through land colonization -- mostly government-owned lands -- through the installation of

[-7-]

water systems, through all the kinds of things that may promote human betterment. Of course, he does have the resources with which to do it. I would think that this would be the kind of identification which might be better in terms of the whole idea of the Alliance for Progress."

Dick said, "Well, that's a good idea. Let's arrange to have President Kennedy go to Venezuela." I said, "Well, there are a lot of guerilla terrorist activities that have been alarming people in Venezuela. We ought to think carefully about this. But I think this is the kind of government with which President Kennedy should be identified. Lleras Camargo is, of all presidents who have been in Columbia in recent years, perhaps the most popularly oriented in this same way, although naturally the Colombian government is quite a different type of government, in the system that they have developed where the Liberal and Conservative parties have been alternating in office. This is a rather interesting shading of the democratic idea, but I think that everyone admires President Lleras Camargo. Of course, he's very well known for having been in Washington as Secretary-General of the Organization of American States. With Colombia right beside Venezuela, President Kennedy could visit both Bogota and Caracas very appropriately, if he would go on this trip at all." Well, as you know, the trip took place that way.

Incidentally, the President stopped in Puerto Rico on the way. That was quite interesting, not only from the viewpoint of the persons accompanying him who had an opportunity to hear the conversations and become better acquainted with people like

Munoz-Marin [Luis Munoz-Marin] and his wife, and Pablo Casals, who incidentally sat at the dinner table between Mrs. Kennedy [Jacqueline B. Kennedy] and myself.... This is an interesting facet with respect to the President and his wife. I had an opportunity to hear Mrs. Kennedy speaking French throughout the meal, and I was very much impressed with the lively way in which she spoke French, very fluently. As far as I could tell, with my feebler knowledge of French, I think she spoke it excellently. She was talking in a very animated way with Casals throughout the dinner. She sat, at the left of Governor Munoz-Marin, and President Kennedy sat at his right, and at his right again was Mrs. Munoz-Marin. IT was one of these highly specialized seating arrangements for Presidents or for Chiefs of State, you see, where the two Chiefs of State sit side by side so they could talk. Mrs. Kennedy, knowing that they wanted to talk with each other, concentrated entirely on Pablo Casals, apparently with great enthusiasm. As you know, some months later Casals came to the White House and made the great exception to his assertion of some time before that he would never play for any Chief of State whose government maintained relations with Franco [Francisco Franco y Bahamonde].

[-9-]

Anyhow, the point of additional political interest, during the visit to Puerto Rico, was that John Hill came over to confer with President Kennedy from Santo Domingo or from what was -- well, it was still called Ciudad Trujillo at that time. This was indicative of the President's great interest that things would stabilize and develop in a representative and democratic way in the Dominican Republic. Now my chronology here may become a little confused.

O'BRIEN: Well, in this regard, after we finish transcribing the tape, there is an editing process that we go through and try to make it as accurate as possible as to the tape. Then after that we return an as nearly perfect copy as we can get to you. At that point you can go through it and make any changes you want. That also brings up something in the way of content, you know, in the way of names and things. As I think we perhaps talked about on the phone, you have complete literary control over this in regard to anything you say, in personnel matters, or in terms of sensitive things. In fact, you might perhaps want to read that. In regard to anything you say, you have complete control over it, and we can put any kind of security restrictions or usages restrictions you wish on it. The legal agreements we work with on this are very, very flexible. and generally with people, who, like yourself, are involved in national security affairs, if there are things in there that are of a sensitive nature you can item restrict them or do anything you wish. Generally, in terms of the sensitive things, we recommend that you go along with the State Department policies on this, which are, of course, a twenty or thirty year sort of thing. Oh, pardon me, go ahead. I'm sorry.

WOODWARD: I better try to hold to chronology as best I can here. I hope that all this material which doesn't pertain necessarily to the President personally

but which pertains to the carrying out of some of the major steps in his Latin American policy may be of interest.

O'BRIEN: Oh, yes. In fact, I think that I'm interested and the project is interested perhaps even more so in Latin American policy as we are in regard to your contacts with the President. The people that are going to use these things in the future are going to be interested in foreign policy and it's going to go beyond the President, or they're going to take a wide of Neustadt [Richard E. Neustadt] view of the Presidency.

WOODWARD: In the way of chronology, I'm just touching quickly on times that I had an opportunity to talk with the President. After this first conversation, which I remember very pleasantly, the President had taken me into one of the living rooms of the White House and was sitting in his

[-10-]

rocking chair, and we had what I thought was a very friendly and easy conversation. That was the conversation when, as I mentioned before, he brought Goodwin in at the end. Then, a day or two later, I was sworn in, in a kind of a sun room, as I recall, and Chep Morrison [deLesseps Story Morrison] was sworn in at the same time as Ambassador to the Council of the Organization of American States. Chep had his two little children there who were quite the centre of attention. Chep, as you know, was a widower. The President was photographed holding the children. It was a very good-natured sort of ceremony. There were two or three senators most interested in Latin American affairs, Senator Morse [Wayne Morse] and Senator Hickenlooper [Bourke B. Hickenlooper] and a couple of leaders of the House, probably, as I recall, Representative Selden [Armistad I. Selden, Jr.] and one or two others. In any event, that was just a ceremonial, social occasion.

The next matter of importance that occurred was the meeting in Punta del Este which began fairly early in August. This was just barely a month from the time that I came in. I mentioned the meeting that John Leddy and I had with the Ambassadors in Washington from the other American republics. Then, I remember, rather keenly, that it was suggested to me that I might pick up some more orientation he was going to have with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to tell them about the plans for the meeting since he was going to head the United States delegation. So I went up to the meeting with Mr. Dillon. He outlined the ideas, pretty much a summary of what John Leddy had outlined to the Latin American Ambassadors. I remember particularly that Senator Symington [Stuart Symington] raised the question of what the United States planned to do about the population problem. Secretary Dillon, Secretary of the Treasury, said, "Well, that's not exactly in my line. That's more of a political matter. Perhaps Woodward, coming from the Department of State, can take on that question." Of course, I assumed he was pulling my leg. But I did try to make a serious answer.

[INTERRUPTION}

O'BRIEN: When you want to cut off this morning, don't hesitate to say this is it. I can come back another day because I'm in the Washington area and will be here for the next seven or eight months. So there's no problem at all of arranging time or as long as you have time available. And another thing, too, in doing this, I do a good deal of preparation and I put questions together, so if this can be of any help in jogging your memory....

WOODWARD: Well, I'll try to cover all the main points.

O'BRIEN: Okay.

WOODWARD: Let's see. We were about to get into the conference

[-10-]

at Punta del Este which was resulted in the agreement amongst the twenty countries, excluding Cuba, whose delegation was there but naturally not willing to sign any of the documents. Since the other people at the conference.... Dillon was so familiar with the subject. John Leddy was there. He had done, I think, the lion's share of the work and the actual detail of the preparation of the data. Ed Martin [Edwin M. Martin], who was Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs, was there. Schlesinger was there. Rostow [Walt W. Rostow] was there.

At the meeting of the Alliance for Progress, I had very little to do with the substantive discussions, but I sat beside the chief of the U.S. delegation during all of the meetings. I was there to do anything he might want me to do. I, of course, then heard everything, everything that was said by all of the delegates. One of the most conspicuous events at this meeting was the speech by Che Guevara [Ernesto Che Guevara]...

O'BRIEN: Yes.

WOODWARD: ...which was filled with the specious propaganda line, the Castro line, which attributed to the United States the responsibility for everything bad that had happened to Cuba for a long time before, and particularly for certain violent events which, I think, have been subsequently shown to have taken place without any responsibility on the part of the United States. One of these, for example, was the explosion which occurred when a French munitions ship docked in Havana harbor and when carelessness, apparently resulted in one of the cases exploding. This set off all the rest and they had a tremendous disaster killing several workmen. The Cubans immediately said, "This is U.S. sabotage." It was something for which I don't think any United States agent could have had any responsibility at all, or any part in.

Well, in any event, one of the things that I lamented as I sat there listening the Guevara, was that: 1) I had not been steeped enough in the background of everything that had happened in Cuba; and 2) that I did not consider myself eloquent enough in Spanish; and 3)

that I was not an experienced enough debater to have requested Dillon's permission to answer Guevara, because I thought he exposed himself to a father devastating rebuttal. If we'd had someone there who might have been capable of doing it.... Of course, the specifications I'm outlining for the ability for someone to do this are almost impossible qualifications for an American. But I have known at least one American whom I think could have done it and that was Henry Holland; he had the best command of Spanish of any American official I have ever known.

O'BRIEN: Yes, did you have an instant translation there? Did you have interpreters that were interpreting Spanish

[-11-]

into English? Was it that sort of arrangement?

WOODWARD: Yes, there was a simultaneous translation, but I listened to it entirely in Spanish. My Spanish is pretty good, but I'm now talking about being able to compete with a really fiery orator. This requires a very special brand of excellence and skill. I might mention parenthetically that just for my personal satisfaction, since I've had the time to try to do it, I've had the personal ambition to perfect my Spanish so that hypothetically I could do that if I had the opportunity to do it. I'm getting close to it now, and I've devoted thousands of hours to it since I've had the time to devote those hours to it. Incidentally, I've become much more widely read in the literature. I wish that I had been better versed when I had more opportunity to use it in my work. In any event, I've gotten far enough along with that that I'm now trying to get a good working knowledge of French that I haven't had before. I just came back a few weeks ago from three weeks over in the provinces of France to try to exercise it and find out just how I'm getting along. Just this morning before you came I was sitting here, reading out loud to myself from one of the most modern novels that has ever come out of Spain...

O'BRIEN: Oh, is that right?

WOODWARD: ...a novel, strangely enough, with an English name, called *Off-Side*. It's really a weird book by a man named Gonzalo Torrente Ballester. Anyhow, this is just an example. I've gone through dozens of books and read a great many of them out loud to myself to try to improve my fluency and my pronunciation and accent.

Getting back to the conference on the Alliance for Progress, after that long, parenthetical comment, one of the things that impressed me, while I had the opportunity to be observing pretty much what the others were doing there, was the really remarkable prospects of a relatively little-noticed effort that was going on but which occupied a full committee at the meeting in Punta del Este, which was the effort to work out a coffee agreement. Mike Blumenthal [W. Michael Blumenthal], who was a very able economist and negotiator who had come in with the Kennedy Administration, was working on the coffee agreement.

Naturally, the United States' part in this was ostensibly only to try to work out something we could agree to as being the principle consuming market for coffee, but he was doing a great deal more than this. He was trying to help the coffee producing countries to find formulae and devices by which they could get together and agree on the amount of their export quotas, on a system for establishing the methods by which quotas would go down if prices went down, and by which quotas would be increased if prices went up. It took a long time to negotiate this and more meetings after this one. Knowing that fourteen countries of Latin America export significant amounts of coffee, and that several of them are very largely dependent for their foreign exchange receipts

[-12-]

on coffee, it struck me that this concrete negotiation exchange was going to have tremendous significance for the entire area. I might say that when I finally left office the following March of 1962, I wrote letters to all of our own chiefs of mission in the field, and I emphasized the importance that I attributed to the efforts to get a coffee agreement. I urged them all to do everything they could to try to promote agreement on this subject which, I thought, would have such tremendous common benefit.

Well, eventually this agreement was concluded. There was a problem of United States ratification of the agreement, which occurred after I left office but which was carried out in the department by people who were then in charge of Latin American Affairs and the Office of Economic Affairs, and I suppose, the Office for Congressional Liaison. Then, some time later on, in order to complete United States cooperation as the biggest consumer, there was the need for implementing legislation by which the United States would cooperate in reporting all of its import of coffee to a central secretariat so that there would be some kind of control over the export quotas of the various producing countries.

As I say, I expressed my own view that this was very important. Time after time, when President Kennedy asked me what I thought was most important to work on, I mentioned on two different occasions to him personally that I thought that this was the most important thing that we could accomplish. I think it was. I think that it's as important as the Alliance for Progress.

O'BRIEN: As I understand, with the exception of Brazil, there's been a reluctance of producing countries on the coffee agreements to limit production. Did you make any efforts at that point to get producing nations, nations like Colombia as well as Brazil, to limit production?

WOODWARD: Well this was, of course, a continuing process. This was an obvious cornerstone of the coffee agreement. There was no possibility of having a coffee agreement without having agreement on the amounts of exportable production each country could enjoy. My emphasis was only that whenever Mike Blumenthal felt that he needed assistance in terms of making representations, if he needed additional people to assist him in the actual negotiations, if he needed any kind of backstopping, that we should sacrifice almost anything else, administratively, to getting him

personnel he needed and to assisting him. He spearheaded the whole thing. I can't say that I personally made any representation to any other government which contributed to this, but I utilized what influence I had in my position to emphasize to everybody throughout the United States government that this was important to get done. It was done, I'm glad to say, and I think it's a great credit to all the people who took part in it. And it's working. Of course, many of the countries would like to have larger quotas, but every time they start to think of serious steps to eliminate the quota system, or to enlarge quotas, they realize

[-13-]

that it would be disastrous for them because oversupply in the past has caused serious drops in prices. There were either disastrously low prices or excessively high prices. It got to the point where people drank less coffee or watered it down -- used less for the same number of cups -- and then got into the habit of doing that. That, from the viewpoint of the coffee producers, is one of the sad things that happened during the last period when there were excessively high prices -- before the coffee agreement was concluded. It became customary to use less coffee per cup, and this habit, in the United States at least, has to a large degree stuck. The market is in a very stable condition in terms of how much it can observe. And I think that the price now, which is nowhere near as high as it was at these great peaks, is a very reasonable price for the consumer.

[BEGIN SIDE II TAPE I]

WOODWARD: I mention this particular problem, even though its solution has been brought about by the coffee agreement, because I think that it has a significance that goes way beyond the actual stabilization of the price that the producer and shipper gets. The first way in which it goes beyond this is that which such a very large production of coffee in Brazil and Colombia, in particular, and such a large proportion of the economy devoted to the production of coffee in certain Central American countries, naturally the workers of the country are dependent upon the wages they get from coffee producers. A coffee producer can always point out quite logically that if he raises the level of wages it's going to bankrupt him when the prices begin to fluctuate. So the only solid basis upon which there is any hope of getting a real spread of the benefits of price of coffee to the entire coffee economy, that is, to people all up and down the line, is when there is a continuing stability in prices and also a continuing stability in the volume of activity.

O'BRIEN: Yes.

WOODWARD: It is no longer a question of having jobs one year for lots of people and the next year for many less. I consider this of tremendous importance as a precedent in trying to solve the question of capricious, disastrously fluctuating prices in other commodities and in trying to work out a certain amount of order in international trade. There are some products in which steps have been taken in this direction, but there is no case now that I know about. In fact it's quite obvious

that there is no other case in which so many countries have agreed to limit their exportation to a particular amount of any product. To do this means that they must take some steps to organize themselves internally to take care of the possibility of overproduction, to avoid tremendous surpluses which are more than can be sold. Local consumption can't be increased much, though some additional quantities can be sold to some of the markets that are outside the quota system. The COffee Agreement allows for the possibility of developing markets in

[-14-]

countries which are not parties to the agreement, like the Soviet Union, which might eventually consume a great deal more coffee.

But the fact is that here's a precedent for trying to put some order into international commodity trade. The detractors and critics would call this regimentation and would deplore this. But the fact is, if you will take note, that during recent years when there have been so many complaints about so many things pertaining to relations with Latin America, you've heard practically nothing about coffee. The last few days now there have been indications that because of unexpected freezes in Brazil and thus reductions in exportable coffee from the principal producing country. prices have gone up a few cents per pound. Of course, in a system where there is inflation throughout the world, it's only natural that a stable price level should increase with inflation in the price of other products. This is one method by which this may occur. In other words, it's possible that an increase of this kind may continue, at least a part of it may continue, but not beyond the amount that would be commensurate with general inflation.

In any event, this, if one concentrates upon it, establishes a most interesting precedent, and I think it's an extremely successful agreement and measure. This impression was made on me at the Conference of the Alliance for Progress, and I continued to push as much as I could for an agreement after that.

After that meeting was concluded, the next significant event that I can recall was President Kennedy's appearance at the United Nations in September. I was asked to go up there to help President Kennedy, to give him some briefing material and to talk to him and answer any questions he might have in his preparation for a meeting with the president of Argentina. The president of Argentina was embarking on a trip around the world and he went directly from Argentina to New York. He stopped there very briefly and had a breakfast meeting with President Kennedy. He was in New York, I guess, only about twenty-four hours.

O'BRIEN: This is Frondizi [Arturo Frondizi], isn't it?

WOODWARD: President Frondizi, yes. Then he made an official visit to Canada. Then he went East. He went all the way around the world, making several official visits, and came back, touching very briefly and unofficially in San Francisco and then in New Orleans. There he had a side trip and went over to Palm Beach to see President Kennedy again. This was all more or less extra-official, informal. Then he went back to Buenos Aires. Before this meeting, let's see now.... I think it was at

this point that President Kennedy asked Adlai Stevenson if he would have a preliminary conversation with President Frondizi in Trinidad. I'm trying to remember if there were two trips by President Frondizi. I think there were two separate trips. In other words, the trip around the world, I believe, was subsequent, and on this occasion President Frondizi went to the U.N. and back again. The next time he came up, he went on his trip around the world, and Ambassador Stevenson went down to Trinidad to have a conversation with him before he flew over

[-15-]

the U.S. to Montreal in Canada.

I found the mechanics of President Kennedy's interview with President Frondizi very interesting. I worked late at night over in the U.S., U.N. headquarters polishing off the last parts of the briefing material and then had a date, quite early in the morning, before breakfast, to present it to President Kennedy. Ed Martin was there to answer questions in the fields that he knew a good deal more about than I did. He was then Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs. President Kennedy led us into his bedroom, after we got through the reception, you know, by the Secret Service. He was in a kimono when we came in, his breakfast was served to him on his wife's vanity table. He ate his breakfast while he listened to us present the briefing material and asked us a couple of questions quickly. He got dressed while we were waiting for President Frondizi and his Foreign Minister to arrive, and the Secretary of State and others. There was a room nearby where a large breakfast table was arranged. When President Frondizi came, President Kennedy asked him to come into another room with him, to a sitting room, and told us to go ahead and eat breakfast. So Secretary Rusk, the Argentine foreign minister, and the rest of the men who were with either government sat down and ate breakfast. The two Presidents never did come to the breakfast table. Presumably Frondizi had had his breakfast before, too. They didn't take any time from the conversation to eat. Both of them had eaten their breakfast before the breakfast. as it were, which was an interesting procedure.

O'BRIEN: The President was still in his kimono?

WOODWARD: Oh, no. He had his clothes on. Then the Foreign Ministers, of course, were talking all during this time and afterward for a long time because the meeting between the two presidents lasted a long time, just entirely by themselves with an interpreter. Neither president spoke the language of the other. Then there was a kind of general meeting. There was at this time nothing particularly conclusive in the conversations.

That very morning, President Kennedy was scheduled to make his address to the U.N. This was quite an impressive address. It was his first address to the U.N. Then, quite by coincidence, it happened that the Secretary of State had organized, before the President knew he was going to speak on that day, a luncheon in honor of the chiefs of the Latin American delegates in the quarters of the U.S. Representative in the Waldorf Towers, in Adlai

Stevenson's quarters. Naturally, with the President making his speech and being there just an hour before this, he was made the host of the luncheon instead of the Secretary of State.

A few days before this, in some conversation.... I forget just what the reason was, but I had a conversation with the President back in Washington, and he said, "Well, how do you like it here? Would you like to be back in Chile?" I said, "Well, Mr. President, I'd rather be almost anywhere than here." Then I said, "What am I saying? You're the President of the United States." He didn't think it was quite as funny as I did, although he was so re-

[-16-]

laxed that it was natural I should make a spontaneous reply to him. I was discouraged with the prospects of accomplishing anything at the conference that was coming up in January to deal with the problem of Cuba. In any event, at this luncheon meeting, the President was talking to one of the Latin American Ambassadors to the U.N. and he called me over and he said, "We got this man back from Chile. He was pretty reluctant, but he's here." He sort of said this laughingly. I said, "Well, Mr. President, the great compensation is to be working here for you." This was true. He was a very agreeable and likeable man. This rather jocular exchange was an amusing one in retrospect.

After that meeting, I would say that one of the most important events that was taking place in the work of the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs pertained to the extremely unsettled condition of the Dominican Republic. One thing led to another, and we began to get the impression that President Ramfis Trujillo really had the intention of trying to incorporate dissident elements in his Cabinet and have a more representative government. We had become persuaded that it would help him to get some expression of confidence from the other American republics, to the extent of trying to lift the embargo that had been placed against him. So it was decided that we would propose the idea of lifting the embargo. George Ball, who was Under-Secretary of State, asked me if I would make the presentation to the special subcommittee handling the Dominican Republic problem at the Organization of American States and take the place of Chep Morrison on this occasion because Chep Morrison, at one time, years before, had accepted a decoration from Trujillo. I understand that Chep didn't know him, but had been mildly friendly in a passing way with the former dictator. So I made the presentation, and I worked very hard over this. I had invaluable assistance from John Crimmins, who was then working on the Dominican work, and made the proposal to the subcommittee that we agreed to lift the embargo.

Well, no sooner had I made the presentation to the committee -- I think it was a day or two afterward -- the uncle of Ramfis Trujillo, who had a kind of a private army in the Dominican Republic, came back to the Dominican Republic. He had left the country some weeks before, thus giving a rather wholesome indication of prospects of improving political stability. Other factors also made us suspect that the whole situation might unfold into violence and that there might be a period of repression in which the opposition would be dealt with very harshly. We imagined all kinds of extremes of violence.

The upshot of this was that, to be prepared for the most extreme possibilities, two or three U.S. naval vessels were assigned to be just beyond the three-mile limit off the coast of the Dominican Republic, off the capital. Things seemed to be rapidly rising to a crisis of

some sort. It wasn't at all clear what was going to happen. But the then head of the Air Force, General Rodriguez [Pedro R. Rodriguez] finally decided he was going to try to stymie this movement which looked as though it was going to be a repressive movement. He made some gestures with the Air Force.

On a Saturday morning, the eighteenth of November, 1961 -- this is burned into my memory because we were waiting expectantly in the

[-17-]

State Department and had intermittent conversations with John Hill, who was the charge d'affaires in the Dominican Republic -- I went up to see the Secretary of State. I remember saying to him, "I think that we ought to be completely aware of the situation we face. With contingents of Marines on these naval vessels, just across the horizon, just beyond the three mile limit, if it turns out that there is some kind of extreme violence in the city, the natural sequel is to land the Marines. If we do that, this will be the first complete exception to the non-intervention policy since it was established." That policy was established back in 1931 by Franklin Roosevelt. Here it was thirty years later, 1961. I witnessed an interesting clue to the mentality and the reserve of the Secretary of State, Secretary Rusk, whose ideas on basic principle he usually kept to himself. He said, "Do you have a map of the city of Ciudad Trujillo? I wonder where the best place would be for the Marines to land." I went downstairs and brought back a map which was a rather poor map of the city. He looked it over with the ideas that he must have had as a former officer in the Pentagon to see where he, if he were organizing, would look for possibilities for a landing place and where there were key airfields and so forth. I pointed out where the airfields were.

Anyhow, the interesting upshot of this day, which was so graven into my memory, is that, much to our surprise, that afternoon Ramfis Trujillo had the remains of his father dug up and put in a box. He made arrangements for the summary execution of three or four of the people who were the most likely suspects of having shot his father, who were in prison. He had these people taken out and shot, executed. He put the remains of his father on his father's yacht, purchased from Joseph Davies -- the man who had been U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union -- and had a great box full of what were presumed to be U.S. bank notes and other negotiable securities, and sailed to Martinique or Guadeloupe, one of the French Islands, whence, he took these objects by airplane, on Air France, to Paris, where he had his father's body buried in a churchyard in Paris.

Then we got a telephone call, one of the several telephone calls we had from John Hill. He said, "Hector Trujillo," -- the President's brother who had been nominal President -- "has asked us if he can take asylum or if he can go to Fort Lauderdale. He'd like to take his family there and all of his relatives. Would we provide transportation for him?" Well, it seemed to me an excellent opportunity to have all of this political faction out of the Dominican Republic. It would probably improve the possibility of stability. So I got an okay on it from Secretary Rusk and called up Wilbur Morrison, who was a Pan American vice president down in Miami, and asked if he could provide an airplane at the expense of the Department of State to take these people to Fort Lauderdale. When we helped them to go to Fort Lauderdale, we let them enter the U.S. with the idea that they would, as soon as

possible, find someplace to live outside the United States because it was considered politically undesirable at that time for them to stay in the United States. This operation was carried out, and the next day they all went to Fort Lauderdale.

Things then began slowly to stabilize and, of course, there

[-18-]

were many ups and downs in the political events in the Dominican Republic between that time and now. I guess that there have probably been times when some people have wondered whether all this action which resulted from the Trujillos' leaving was the best thing for stability in the country. But, in the long run, I think it has been demonstrated that there is no question but that it was favorable to the permanent stability of the country.

O'BRIEN: There are two things that I wonder if we could just touch on today that are of interest in some of the interviewing I'm doing. One of those is where you contacted Secretary Rusk, particularly in regard to Cuba, Cuban policy, in between, of course, the Bay of Pigs and the Missile Crisis. Is there anything that stands out in your memory in that regard?

WOODWARD: Well, I think I've mentioned already about the only aspect of this in which I can remember a discussion with Secretary Rusk on the Dominican Republic problem. He was always ready to answer any questions or give his approval or his improvements on any suggestion. During that day, on the eighteenth of November, 1961, after our conversation in the morning, I called him up. He was at home later on that day. I called him up and got his approval on the telephone for asking Wilbur Morrison to charter the airplane. I had that conversation with Wilbur Morrison that Saturday evening, on the eighteenth of November.

O'BRIEN: Yes.

WOODWARD: In other words, Secretary Rusk was always accessible. I always liked him very much. I thought he was always very reasonable and an easy man to talk with. He sometimes, when I talked to him about something like the approval of a telegram or some matter, would call in his secretary and just redictate the telegram and improve on mine. And it was always, I'll have to admit, a substantial improvement.

But now, with respect to Cuba, I found it very disturbing, as time went on, in preparation for the conference of ministers of foreign relations, that there was so little concrete in the way of any kind of formula for dealing with this problem. The idea of having the meeting had been conceived and had been virtually decided upon, although it was necessary to have a meeting of the Council of the Organization of American States to decide definitely on this question, in the month of December. The meeting of the COuncil took place and came within an ace of deciding that the meeting of Foreign Ministers should not take place. It required a two-thirds majority of the countries present to approve the meeting. There

was one country short of a majority, so far as we knew. When the voting took place, I believe that the Uruguayan Ambassador, whose name was Ambassador Clulow [Carlos A. Clulow], took it upon himself, without clear authorization from his government to vote in favor of having the meeting. There then ensued a discussion about the place. Since it seemed likely that there would be demonstrations by Castro enthusiasts organized in any capital, it

[-19-]

was finally decided that the best place for it would be Punta del Este, which meant having another inter-American meeting at the same place the meeting for the Alliance for Progress had taken place. So plans went ahead to have the meeting in Punta del Este in the last week in January, 1962.

The day, in early December, 1961, that the vote took place on the question of whether to have the meeting -- it was late on a Saturday afternoon -- it looked to us as though there might not be a vote in favor of having the conference. I had mixed feelings about this because I, quite frankly, didn't see what was going to come out of the meeting. Still, since the idea had attained the reputation, at least, of being an United States idea, even though, as far as I knew, the original suggestion had come from the Columbia Government, there was a certain element of defeat which would be implied by a vote against having the meeting. I went out to talk to Rusk about this. He was raking the leaves in his yard in Spring Valley. I said I didn't know how hard we should try to persuade these countries to go ahead with the approval of the meeting, and there it was nip and tuck as to whether there it would be approved. As I recall, he seemed to be clearly in favor of the idea of having a meeting, but he didn't feel that we should be deeply concerned if the vote went against the meeting.

So I went back and the vote took place. The meeting was decided, on, and the place was decided on. Of course, Secretary Rusk was going to be the man in charge with the responsibility of accomplishing the result. I had told him again that no concrete plans that really seemed to be workable were coming out of the Columbian government and that the Columbian foreign minister didn't seem to be obtaining the consensus of other governments to anything concrete as he had expressed confidence in being able to do. We didn't have agreement from enough countries to carry out a concrete plan, such as an agreement on a general breaking of diplomatic relations with Cuba which had never been agreed on by all the countries together. Three, or four countries still had relations at that time. The thing was really up in the air. I think some people thought this was probably the principal reflection on me, on my performance as Assistant Secretary, that I didn't have a well worked out plan for the results at this meeting. Of course, this was fundamentally the whole background of my assignment as Assistant Secretary. No one else wanted the job after the Bay of Pigs since there was no clear sequel to that event. The question was, of course, what could they do under these circumstances with Brazilians and Argentines. I was led to believe that he was developing support and some ideas from the Argentines and Brazilians, the biggest countries. We got right up to the meeting, and, of course, we did have projected resolutions, but in the first place, they didn't seem to add up to a great deal and they didn't seem to have general approval, didn't seem to have a majority of approval in hemisphere. I was, quite frankly, disappointed in the Columbian government's initiative in this.

Anyhow, one thing led to another, and we went to the meeting. I really have never seen a man show physical signs of a concentrated effort which was becoming more and more discouraging, during a short space of time, than I noticed in Dean Rusk during that period. He said afterwards that it was the most difficult conference he'd ever gone to. He tried, and he tried, and he tried to work out some formula with the Argentines, Brazilians and Chileans, as the biggest South American countries, that would have some effect of showing solidarity in the face of the "Communist country" in the Western Hemisphere. In the course of these discussions, Rostow had been very instrumental and taken quite a large part in preparing the text of a statement which was getting general approval, which was a statement on which all the countries would agree -- and they all seemed to be in agreement with this -- that the inter-American system and communism are incompatible. We can thank the Mexican Foreign Minister for the fact that his idea received general endorsement because in his main speech, which as head of a delegation he made at the beginning of this meeting...

O'BRIEN: Now this is Manuel Tello, isn't it?

WOODWARD: Yes, Manuel Tello. Manuel Tello, on his own initiative, entirely, included in his speech an assertion that communism and the inter-American system are incompatible. And with this endorsement from Mexico, the text of a resolution was developed in the subsequent committee meetings, in which, as I say, Walt Rostow had a lot to do with drafting and he did a very fine job.

Among the resolutions that had been introduced at the beginning of the meeting, there was one which the Colombians introduced, which he called for a general agreement on breaking diplomatic relations with the present government of Cuba. An almost identical resolution, except for that main point -- and many small variations -- was proposed by the Uruguayan delegation.

The discussions, as I say, between Rusk and the big countries, went on throughout this meeting. I wasn't present at these discussions; he asked Goodwin to go with him to most of these meetings and some of the other people. As a matter of fact, there came a point where I didn't seem to have very much to do. We polished off some drafts of subsidiary resolutions, one of which where I supplied some key phrases, gave all the countries latitude in the action they might consider it necessary to take concerning the quarantining of trade with Cuba. I remember very clearly discussing with our representative on that committee, who was Ed Jamison [Edwin A. Jamison], and the Venezuelan Ambassador to Washington, the wording of the key phrase. The wording that was adopted, had the result that our government, immediately after the meeting, took steps to consolidate its position on trade with Cuba, terminating all trade except for foodstuffs and drugs.

During this time when Rusk was negotiating on the bases of the Colombian resolution, I had some free time. Supporting the Colombian resolution were precisely twelve countries, and fourteen countries were required for minimum approval. Two countries that we thought we might get to support the general idea were Uruguay, whose own resolution

was close, and Haiti. We were quite disappointed and surprised at the Haitians. The Haitians didn't want to support the resolution, but the reason had nothing to do with the resolution itself. The reason

[-21-]

was fairly obviously that they decided they were going to be standoffish and hurt because, just before the conference we had taken action notifying them that aid was going to be cut off, because the lawyers in the AID program had determined that under the Hickenlooper Amendment they were not considered to be taking the steps that they might be able to take to settle certain debts that they had to American companies. The Hickenlooper Amendment required that we cut off aid, so they had been notified that aid was going to be cut off. Well, the principal item classified as aid was an export-import bank loan that had almost been concluded to finance the importation of materials to expand the airport in Port-au-Prince. This was the principal thing they were concerned about. They laid great store on this project.

So, I thought, "Well, I'll just try to dig into this and see how much there is to this grievance." I hadn't been familiar with it before that because it was being handled entirely by the AID program and the problem had just developed a few days before we went to Punta del Este. Well, I spoke to the Haitian Ambassador to Washington who was there, Dr. Mars [Louis Mars.] He said that they had felt that the stoppage of aid was quite unfair because they considered that they had been doing everything they could to straighten out these debts. He said that they had made some payments on the debts and that they were going to make some more payments as soon as they had the money, and that it wasn't right that we should have cut off this aid in an abrupt way. Their Foreign Minister was there, and Dr. Mars asked me to come and talk with the Foreign Minister, which I did. I remember going to their room in the hotel on a Sunday. I said, "If the facts are as you say they are, that you have been taking these steps, I agree with you; I think that you're doing as much as you can with the limited resources you have to try to straighten these things out." They said that they had every intention of straightening out these problems.

We had a little radio, sort of a ham radio, in our hotel, and I got in touch with Ted Moscoso [Teodoro Moscoso] in Washington, and with Mike Barall [Milton Barall], who was my deputy handling work with the AID Program, and I said, "The Haitian Foreign Minister and the Ambassador have declared that they're really doing everything they can on this. If it would be possible for the lawyers to be persuaded that they are doing this, it would be an immense help to us here." Ted and Mike talked this over, and we talked about it insofar as we could over this rather feeble facility. They said that they would take my word for the declarations of the Foreign Minister and the intentions to straighten these things out and they would get a telegram out the next day, to Port-au-Prince, and send me a copy, to show that the lawyers had made the decision that they could go ahead with the Export-Import Bank loan for the airport in Port-au-Prince.

This was done. When the Haitian foreign minister was apprised of this, he told Ambassador Mars to tell me that they were happy about this development and that they would be delighted to cooperate with us in any way possible at the conference, meaning they were prepared to vote on the Colombian resolution or something resembling it.

O'BRIEN: Is this the origin of the report in Morrison's book about the Haitian vote?

[-22-]

WOODWARD: Yes, there were wild accusations in the press about this and Morrison takes credit in his book for having done something about this. I don't know whether he had some conversation on the side, but this is the whole negotiation, and as far as I know he had nothing to do with it at all. I did it entirely by myself with the Haitians. I told Rusk the next day. "I think that now we can expect that the Haitians are going to be cooperative and they're going to change this very strange attitude that they've had, siding with the Argentines on the question of not taking any kind of action."

Well, one thing led to another and finally Rusk seemed quite discouraged about the possibilities of getting cooperation from the Argentines, the Brazilians and the Chileans. The conference had been going on for two weeks, and we were getting up to the time when we were expected to have the final plenary session. As I recall, it was on the same Sunday night, very late, that he had a meeting that lasted about three hours, at least two hours, with the Foreign Ministers of these three countries and perhaps one or two others. It was only with interpreters; nobody was with him. He came back from that meeting, and we were all waiting for him. It was about one o'clock at night. The meeting had gone on from ten to one as I recall. He said that he was just not getting any place with the Colombian resolution. He said, "Will you fellows here" -- and he was speaking to Rostow, Goodwin and myself -- "will you three fellows try to work up something that puts these ideas in different words so we can start on it fresh in the morning."

We decided that we'd do it separately and see what we could do at first. I got off in a corner with a typewriter and I read through the Colombian resolution. Just to refresh my memory, I read through the Uruguayan resolution, even though nobody had subscribed to the Uruguayan resolution except the Uruguayans: it was a one=country proposal. As I went through that, I was impressed with how close it was to the Colombian resolution. After fiddling with redrafting for an hour or so, I came to the conclusion that I would get to Rusk as soon as I could in the morning and suggest to him that since those two resolutions were so close, that we try to get the Uruguayans to agree on some compromise language, and I say, "Now since we're almost certain to get the Haitian vote, we'll get fourteen. Fourteen is a bare majority. If you have in your hand a resolution which is supported by a majority, even though a bare majority, this is the most eloquent argument to persuade other countries, to subscribe to it."

This is precisely the way I presented it to him while he was having a cup of breakfast coffee, before the other fellows had gotten to him with their redrafts. We hadn't had any rechecking, as I recall, at all before we went to bed that night. Rusk said, "That's a good idea. Let's try it. Let's get the fourteen countries together."

We did, right away. At nine o'clock they came together and they commissioned the Colombian Foreign Minister, the Uruguayan Foreign Minister, the authors of the two resolutions, and the United States Secretary of State as a committee of three to try to

reconcile the two resolutions. At this meeting, since I had suggested the idea, Rusk took me along. In fact, at this committee of three, on the

[-23-]

United States side there was just Ruck and myself and the interpreter.

In the course of the discussion at our table, Uruguay was represented by the foreign minister and Felix Polleri, the chief of the political division of the Uruguayan Foreign Office (who is now the -- just has arrived -- Uruguayan Ambassador to the Organization of American States.)

I had just recently been Ambassador to Uruguay, and I knew these men very well and had had many conversations with the Foreign Minister, who was an ex-naval officer, Martinez Montero [Homero Martinex Montero]. In the course of the conversation, among the three Foreign Ministers, the Uruguayan Foreign Minister said, "Well, we cannot agree to the clause in the Colombian resolution that the countries should agree to break diplomatic relations with the Castro government." After some discussion, we got into the subject of possibly changing this clause to "removal of the Castro government from the OAS." The Uruguayan Foreign Minister said that, no, he didn't think that his government could take action to approve this because there was nothing to provide clear authorizations for governments to do this.

I remember having looked at the preceding paragraphs, and volunteered, "Now here's a paragraph just before this; here's a paragraph that reiterates that the nations join in expressing their conviction that there is a basic incompatibility between the inter-American system and communism, between communism and the inter-American system." I said, "I wonder if it would be feasible to say that this incompatibility automatically results in the exclusion from the Council of the Organization of American States of the present government of Cuba. So it's the incompatibility that does it, instead of having action taken on the initiative of the member states." I was talking to Martinez Montero and Polleri, in Spanish. It was a very free conversation, and as I turned and looked to Rusk for approval or disapproval the interpreter was interpreting my remarks to Rusk, a rather peculiar situation. Rusk was looking kind of quizzical about this. "This is a very odd idea," is what I imagine that I read in his face. And I thought, "Well, it's just one of those ideas that may not prosper at all. Feliz Polleri turned to his Foreign Minister and he said, "Mr. Minister, we can approve that. We can approve that idea." The Uruguayan Foreign Minister looked a little reflective about it.

At this point in the meeting, a messenger came in and said that the Colombian Foreign Minister was wanted on the long distance telephone. He went out and he talked, and Rusk left the room. At the same time we had a little recess. During the recess, the Colombian and Uruguayan delegations other than their Foreign Ministers, went through all the other clauses in this resolution and rapidly reconciled the language and every other different point, with the result that by the time the Foreign Ministers got back, after this little recess while the Colombian was talking on the telephone, everything had been agreed on except the question of, would the Colombian Foreign Minister accept this change in his political advisor? If so, would Secretary Rusk formally approve this idea, because it wasn't yet clear that the chief of the U.S. delegation had approved my suggestion.

O'BRIEN: Yes.

[-25-]

WOODWARD: Well, the Colombian Foreign Minister came back and we learned afterwards that his President had been talking to him. The President had counseled that he show whatever elasticity was necessary in order to get agreement. The Colombian Foreign Minister had been very firm on most of the details of the wording of significant clauses. Anyhow, he'd just received this advice from his President. When the three Ministers got back to the table, they all agreed without any further question.

O'BRIEN: Yes.

WOODWARD: So, then immediately the documents were drafted up, I mean, were mimeographed so that we could pass them around. We called a meeting again just as fast as we could get the papers prepared and the people together. The secretariat showed itself to be very speedy. They called the fourteen countries together again. As I recall, this was about noon on this day. The plenary was scheduled to be held that night. I asked the man who was handling the work for the Secretariat, a man from the Pan American Union, "How does one make sure that a resolution becomes a "resolution sponsored by the governments that approve it?" He said, "Well, they sign a piece of paper." So, I said, "Well, we'd better be ready here so we make sure that this is fully sponsored, if it's approved by all the Governments present." So the Secretariat got up a signature paper. The Foreign Ministers got together, and the Foreign Ministers were all there. They read the resolution. The Venezuelan Foreign Minister was chairman of this particular gathering of fourteen. He got to his feet and said that he recommended that the resolution be approved by acclamation by the fourteen. Approval was given with no discussion of it whatever.

Then Rusk said that he thought that with this resolution he might be able, if he were so commissioned by the other thirteen, to obtain the approval of several of the remaining countries. We thought that one or more of the big countries would approve. He was so commissioned, and he made this effort, and we were all to get together again in the afternoon. First, we were going to get together as the fourteen and then bring in the others. After Rusk had finished his conversation, he told the fourteen that he was very disappointed to have to tell them that he had had no success whatever. He said that he would not recommend to them that they make any further changes in the resolution. He said the other countries wanted to make changes which would change the whole nature of the resolution so completely that the resolution would be quite different in its significance.

Then two or three of the other countries came to the second half of this meeting, but there wasn't any more discussion. We were just hoping that at the plenary session some of the reluctant countries would have changed their minds, but none of them did change their

minds on the clause that would remove the Castro Government from the Council of the O.A.S. The way this was handled

[-25-]

at the plenary was to have this particular resolution approved, considered paragraph by paragraph. The expulsion clause was the only paragraph that was approved by only fourteen. Every other paragraph got more votes. Some of the paragraphs got virtually unanimity (other than the Cubans.)

The Cuban delegation, of course, was there all this time. Dorticos [Osvaldo Dorticos Torrado], the nominal President of Cuba, had been commissioned and appointed specifically as Foreign Minister for the purpose of going to this meeting. He was President. He was accompanied by that widely-known communist, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, who sat beside him. They were the two principal Cubans. I don't think that Roa [Raul Roa Carcia] was there. He may have been at the meeting, but I don't think so. In any event, they sat there and listened to sufficient votes in the plenary, to remove the representation of their government from the Council of the Organization of American States.

Then, at the end of this plenary, there were, of course, a number of speeches, and there was one speech recommending that a standing ovation be given to the Foreign Minister of Uruguay. Of course, he was the host of the meeting because it was in Uruguay, but the ovation was really for the courage he had shown in taking a stand on the expulsion clause, particularly since the Uruguayan position was different from the stand taken by the government of Brazil and the government of Argentina, which was in a case like this, considered to be quite unusual for the government of Uruguay. And the Uruguayan vote was a determining vote because that one vote would have meant the difference between fourteen and thirteen.

Anyhow, with all the confusion and the lack of clear-cut determination in advance of what we hoped to see come out of his meeting, the result that finally did come out was something of a surprise. I remember a comment by a member of the Mexican delegation, Sanchez Gavito [Vicente Sanchez Gavito], who was then the Mexican Ambassador to the Organization of American States. He was always personable, very friendly and jovial, even though many times he had totally different official positions from those of the United States; he said, "You Americans, you always pull something out of the hat like this idea of the incompatibility between the systems that results in the automatic removal of a government from the Council of the Organization of American States ----"

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[-26-]