

Joseph S. Farland Oral History Interview –JFK# 1, 7/24/1968
Administrative Information

Creator: Joseph S. Farland
Interviewer: Larry Hackman
Date of Interview: July 24, 1968
Place of Interview: Washington, D.C.
Length: 73 pages

Biographical Note

(1914 - 2007). United States Ambassador to Panama (1960 - 1963), discusses time as ambassador in Panama, working with the Department of State, and Latin American policy, among other issues.

Access

Open in part.

Usage Restrictions

According to the deed of gift signed December 14, 2005, 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 The copyright law extends its protection to unpublished works from the moment of creation in a tangible form.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

Joseph S. Farland, recorded interview by Larry Hackman, July 24, 1968, (page number), John F. Kennedy Library Oral History Program.



ORAL HISTORY AGREEMENT

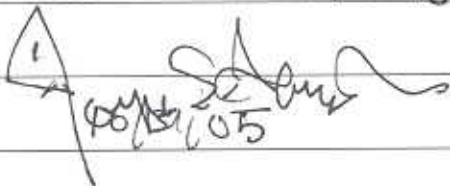
This will confirm my understanding and agreement with the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) with respect to my participation in an oral history interview(s) conducted by the Oral History Program of the John F. Kennedy Library.

1. The interview(s) will be taped and a transcript of the tapes will be made by the Library. A copy of the tape and a transcript (collectively called the "Work"), will be maintained by the Library and made available to the public in accordance with its rules and general policies for research and other scholarly purposes.
2. As soon as the transcription process is complete, the Work will be made available to researchers as part of the John F. Kennedy Library Oral History Program.
3. I hereby grant, assign, and transfer to NARA all rights, title, and interest in the Work, including literary rights and copyright.
4. This agreement contains our entire and complete understanding.

Name Joseph S. FARLAND

Address P.O. Box 578

Winchester, Virginia 22604

Signature 

Date 10/15/05

Signed: Allen Weinstein

ALLEN WEINSTEIN, Archivist of the United States

Date: 12/14/05

Joseph S. Farland – JFK #1

Table of Contents

<u>Page</u>	<u>Topic</u>
2	Appointment as Ambassador to Panama
3	Relationship with the Latin American division of the State Department
7, 72	Change in policy in the State Department between Assistant Secretaries
10	Opinion of John F. Kennedy's [JFK] Latin American policy during 1960 campaign
12	Incident involving raising the Panamanian and American flags together in a ceremony
17	Discussing the ceremony restrictions with Panamanian President Ernest de la Guardia
20	Panamanian-American relations when the Kennedy Administration began
21	Impact of the Kennedy Administration in Panama from 1961-1963
26	Influence on Panamanian internal affairs and political connections
28	Using Rafael Leonidas Trujillo Molina's espionage system to monitor Fidel Castro's activities in Cuba
30	Discussing traffic to and from Cuba with JFK
31	Panamanian problems with Cuba in 1961 and 1962
35	Relationship with staff at the embassy in Panama
38	Issues with AID [Agency for International Development] and getting funding for development in Panama
39, 44	Building a road into the mountainous region of Panama
42	Resistance from AID staff in Panama and Washington
45, 56, 66	President Chiari visiting the United States in 1962
49	Working with Carl Kaysen on advocating for Panamanian development in Washington
49	Meeting with the President about aid to Panama
51	Working on the Panama Canal free treaty issue
55	Reaction of the Panamanian government to the source of development funds
58	Comments on meetings between President Chiari and JFK
62	President Chiari's speech and visit to New York
67	Communication problems with the Department of State
70	Comments on how Carl Kaysen became involved

Oral History Interview

With

Joseph S. Farland

July 24, 1968
Washington, D.C.

By Larry Hackman

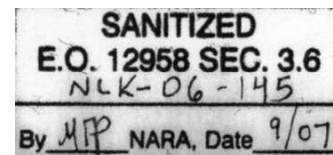
For the John F. Kennedy Library

HACKMAN: This is a recorded interview with former Ambassador Joseph S. Farland. The interview is taking place in the National Archives in room 503. The date is July 24, 1968. And the interviewer is Larry Hackman.

All right, Ambassador Farland, when the Kennedy [John F. Kennedy] Administration came in, apparently you were the only Republican non-career ambassador retained.

FARLAND: I was the only one.

HACKMAN: Do you know, primarily, where your support



[-1-]

came from within the State Department or anyone close to the President or his advisors?

FARLAND: I frankly don't believe there was any major support among Kennedy's advisors or in the State Department. To the best of my knowledge the support came from American businessmen in Panama and from a very unusual support by Panamanians. As a matter of fact, there was an effort made there of which I was appraised only after the fact, but a petition signed by some ten thousand Panamanians was sent to Washington under, or over rather, the signature of the President of Panama requesting my retention. Most unusual situation, I might add.

HACKMAN: At the time was it apparent to you, or did you later find out, that there was any strong opposition developing at the Washington end of the thing from Democrats, West Virginia Democrats?

FARLAND: Well, I heard from several individuals closely

[-2-]

associated with President Kennedy that Senator Jennings Randolph of West Virginia made rather caustic remarks that they should be able to find a Democrat to replace a Republican in that particular post. Outside of that I know of nothing else.

HACKMAN: What kind of relationship had you had with the people in the Latin American field in the State Department up to this time when you were in the Dominican Republic and then in the early days in Panama? Were there any particular problems in that period in negotiating with these people?

FARLAND: Well, the Dominican Republic was an entirely different situation than Panama, and there were problems of magnitude. I think there was a difference—difficulty arose because, one, I was operating under express instructions from Secretary Dulles [John Foster Dulles] as to what to do in that regard; two, the lower echelons were unsympathetic to Trujillo [Rafael Leonidas Trujillo Molina], as such, and even there was a certain amount of sympathy with

[-3-]

the Castro [Fidel Castro] movement. I, for one, of course, was very unsympathetic to Trujillo also, but I was there as the Ambassador of the United States representing a policy, which was simply this: an attempt to turn the man somewhat around. I knew there was no hope whatsoever of changing one of the world's most vicious dictators into a loving individual who had a great deal of concern for humanity. He did not. But my effort was to change the direction and keep enough stability there to prevent a situation arising, which subsequently did arise after his assassination. As a matter of fact, the feeling between Trujillo and me at the end, since I was the one who had, amongst other things, to tell him that his little boy Junior was not going to graduate from Leavenworth, which is an interesting story in itself.

But the day I left he had engineered an attempt to assassinate me and my family on the way to the airport. So let us say that my love for Trujillo was minimal.

[-4-]

However, the complexities that are found in ARA [Bureau of Inter-American Affairs], which is the Latin American area, I think are so multitudinous that it's difficult for one man, the Assistant Secretary of State, to understand fully all of the problems. And I know Dick Rubottom [Roy R. Rubottom, Jr.], who was there most of the time was frustrated beyond belief because of the numerous visits from Latin dignitaries and numerous requirements of going on the Hill, the numerous consultations with returning ambassadors, et cetera. I think there was a breakdown, and I think there still is a breakdown between communication between Latin American Ambassadors, U. S. Ambassadors to Latin American countries, and the Department because of the magnitude of the, by sheer weight of numbers if nothing else. Now, to get back to your question. I'd built up a number of, I think some very good friends in the Department and after having submitted my resignation

[-5-]

as pro forma I received a wire asking that I remain and I did so. I did so knowing that I was, in a sense, an outsider, and that my access to the power structure was going to be substantially curtailed, that I was suspect, in a sense, although I still considered the fact that I was a United States citizen interested in the welfare of our country. But I felt there was a mission yet to be accomplished. I felt that certain things had been started in Panama that augured well, that we had gone from a riot climate to one of a certain amount of amiability in our relationship. I thought that there was the opportunity of bringing about a closer understanding between our two nations, and the relationship which I personally established with the Foreign Minister and with the President were, I felt, such that further forward steps could be taken.

HACKMAN: The Foreign Minister was Dr. Solis [Galileo Solis], is

[-6-]

that right?

FARLAND: Yes. Galileo Solis, who incidentally I understand will be the new Foreign Minister under Arnulfo Arias.

HACKMAN: What is your relationship, or did you have any particular relationship, with Assistant Secretary Tom Mann [Thomas Clifton Mann], who replaced Rubottom? Had there been any change?

FARLAND: Tom replaced... Tom and I had, had over the years a very good relationship. Tom was a little bit suspect and I think a little bit frustrated, and of course, he left the Assistant Secretary position and went to Mexico, I believe. I had one major problem, and Tom and I solved this. This was the day I went to Panama. Before I even arrived, I'd received a number of telegrams from irate U.S. businessmen and Panamanians complaining about difficulties encountered in the free zone in Colon, difficulties that were engendered by the fact that the State Department had decided to

[-7-]

close the consulate in Colon. And this was one of our oldest consulates, and the Colonesses felt that by this closure there was an indication on the part of the United States that Colon meant very little in the affairs of Panama or in the concern of the Department of State. The first thing I did when I got to Panama was—they met me at the dock as a matter of fact, the whole contingent of free zoners—and I said, “Well, my first, before I present credentials even, I shall come over and try to ascertain from you because you’re American citizens and I’m an American citizen, and I want to find out what the problem is. I promise nothing, but I assure you that I will look into it as deeply as possible, as quickly as possible.” And this I did. And after presenting credentials, I wrote several reports requesting that this two man post not be closed but sustained by one man for prestige purposes for the free zone, solely. I

[-8-]

came back up to Washington in view of the fact that I got no satisfaction from my telegram. I asked why, and I was told the decision had already been made and it could not be revoked. And being a political appointee, I said that was perfectly alright with me, but I would like to know who made the decision because I was quite knowledgeable of the fact that this was going to worsen our relationship with Panama at a period in history when our relationship was at a very low ebb and could very easily give rise to riots, which would mean an investigation in Congress, and I wanted to be prepared to name the man who made the decision. Well, the name Rooney [John J. Rooney] came up, and I said, “Well, I’m to understand that it was Rooney’s decision who made this absolute.” “Well, not exactly.” “Well, then who is it?” “Well, perhaps you’d better talk to the Assistant Secretary of State.” So I went in to see Tom, and I said, “Tom, look, I

[-9-]

feel very strongly about this. I’m there on the spot. I’m concerned. I feel that this will cause deterioration that will be deleterious to our whole relationship in Latin America.” So he said, “Joe, if you feel that strongly about it, we’ll keep it open.” And it stayed open until after I left.

HACKMAN: Any particular repercussions from Mr. Rooney on this that you can recall?

FARLAND: I don't think he had a thing to do with it. I think this was one of the whipping boys in the State Department that the State Department uses to do what sometimes they feel has to be done, and they want an excuse for it.

HACKMAN: Can you recall during the '60 campaign having any particular reaction to the stance on Latin America that President Kennedy was taking and in the very early days of the new Administration?

FARLAND: You mean my particular reaction or the reaction of the Panamanians?

[-10-]

HACKMAN: Your reaction.

FARLAND: My reaction was.... Well, during the campaign there was not too much that reached me. I don't know what was going on back here politically, but I was greatly impressed with the President's attitude towards Latin America. Now, being a Latin American hand and having been in the government—I had a certificate from the State Department for ten years service which is unusual for a political appointee—I was terribly impressed with his feeling towards the people. And here is, to me, one of the greatest detriments, I feel, in the Department of State—I'm not putting that correction, I feel that there has been a void in the Department of State towards a feeling towards Latin Americans and Latin American problems. I think that too often Foggy Bottom thinks in cold Anglo-Saxon logic towards people who do not feel that way. And to give you an example of this, we had a problem—I don't know whether you're going

[-11-]

to ask me about the flag or not. If you're going to ask me about that...

HACKMAN: Go ahead and start on it.

FARLAND: But the question came up about raising the flag in Shaler's Triangle. Well, I went in to see Eisenhower [Dwight D. Eisenhower] before I went to Panama, and I told the President that we had not one flag problem that we had two, that my predecessor Julian Harrington [Julian F. Harrington] had lowered the flag in front of the American Embassy and raised it only on certain ceremonial days. The rest of the time the flagpole was without our standard. And Ike just damn near went through the ceiling. The decision on the Panamanian flag was this: one, the Panamanian flag would fly alongside the American flag at an appropriate place provided that I, upon my arrival and within an appropriate time, or the necessary time for examination, would indicate that it was imperative that this be done in furtherance of our relationship. Secretary

[-12-]

Brucker [Wilber M. Brucker] was very much opposed to this, and I think maintained his position throughout every meeting on the subject. Well, I went down there and found that this was the one thing that could be done, one graphic visible thing that could be done to prevent another riot—on July 3 I so indicated. And now we're going in to.... This is secret information. Is this subject to being divulged or not?

HACKMAN: Oh, no, no. You just put it on, and we close it for as long as you want to.

FARLAND: Well, I recommended that the flag be flown. The answer came back: Very well, we will fly it, but only twenty days out of the year. Well, this was tantamount to an invitation to a riot. And I objected strenuously by telegrams and by various means including a call to the White House. At this

[-13-]

point I began making various people a little irritated with this fellow down in Panama for being so persistent. Finally, it came back: Very well, we will fly the flag along with the American flag at the same time it is flown, which is every day of the year. Well, this was fine. Then I get a telegram.... So I'm to inform the Panamanians. Then I get a telegram to this effect: The flag will be flown, but at the ceremony of the raising of the flag the President of Panama cannot touch the halyard. Well, to me this is what is known as being childish, and to the extent that we, the greatest nation in the world, cannot allow a President of his own country to touch a halyard to raise his own flag is just beyond belief. So my telegrams and calls started again. And I finally, at the end of the day, got a telegram and a phone call to the effect that: No, he cannot do so for the reason that this would establish a precedent.

[-14-]

Well, I never, in all my studying of American history, current and past, could understand where a precedent would be established in such a situation, but that was the thinking of the Department of State.

HACKMAN: This was with the desk officer for Panama, or...

FARLAND: This was from the desk officer up. I don't know how many echelons it went through. So I had previously talked to Ernesto de la Guardia [Ernesto de la Guardia, Jr.], who was then President, and he was so excited about this thing that he, I mean the embrasso and all. And I said, "Well, Ernesto, we've got to work out a protocol," knowing that this was what I had to do because he couldn't touch that halyard. So, I said, "Well, suppose we do this. You stand on one side, the governor will stand on the other. You will hold your flag, the governor will hold the flag of the United States. Two policemen of the Canal Zone will march down

[-15-]

to the flag pole. One will go to you, one will go to the governor. They will bring the flags back to the flagpole, and while you're standing at attention and the national anthem of both countries are being played, the flag goes up." He thought this was wonderful. That was the day. That evening I got a call from the then Foreign Minister Mike Marino, and Mike says, "The President wants to raise his own flag." And I said, "Look, Mike. We were on a first name basis. I said, "Look, you know Washington well. You know the wheels that have to be turned in that government. This decision has been made. I've already submitted this protocol to Washington. They've approved it. Now why try to change it at this late date?" He said, "Well, Joe, if it isn't changed, there'll be no Panamanians at the ceremony." SO I began again a series of my letters, I mean my telegrams and phone calls. That's when I got back the

[-16-]

statement that this might establish a precedent. So, I don't know whether you want these kind of stories or not...

HACKMAN: Yes, they're fine.

FARLAND: ...but this is what happened. I've been a lay reader in the Episcopal church, and I've been very active, and I didn't know what to do. I was at the end of the rope. I've never felt so drained in my life, that after all this work, we're going to wind up with no Panamanians at the ceremony, the riot will take place, and everything that we've been working for is down the proverbial drain. So I went up to the residence, just sick at heart. I knew I had to do something. I didn't know what. I got out a little copy of a prayer by St. Francis of Assisi. It starts "Oh Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace...." And I read that over four times, got in my limousine, and drove out to las Cumbres and up on the mountain to see Ernesto de la Guardia. He was sitting

[-17-]

on his porch overlooking this beautiful las Cumbres area. And we had a drink, and as gently as possible, I told Ernesto he could not touch the halyard. And he broke into tears. He sat there and cried. And for this reason. He said, "You know," he said, "Joe, I know the United States well. I was schooled at Dartmouth. I spend much of my time in the United States. I have so many friends there." He said, "But I want you to know this." And he said, "This has no reference to you, but it does to the State Department. Until the people in power in the Department of State realize that we Latinas think with our heart and not with our head, and that form oft-times is more important than substance, never will there be a real understanding." So I talked to him a long time, and I told him that unless somebody showed up, there was going to be a riot, and this meant that the Communists were going

[-18-]

to score a major victory, and that he didn't want that and neither did we. After about an hour of conversation, I said, "I'm here with my hat in my hand, Ernesto." I said, "You just must have the Foreign Minister there." I said, "I realize that you can't be there, but..." He said, "All right, I'll see that Mike attends the ceremony." And then I did one thing that's never been reported to the State Department. They never understood it. The newspaper people in Panama never understood it. But I said, "Ernesto, this has been a long battle by you, and it's been of great concern to me." And I said, "Since you can't be there, will you offer me the hospitality of the Presidencia for a glass of champagne after the flag goes up?" "Como no. Of course," he said. And I knew he couldn't refuse it because this was—I mean no Latin would. So immediately as the flag went up, I got in my limousine and went to the Presidencia, had a glass of champagne

[-19-]

with Ernesto. Newspaper people were there. They couldn't quite understand it. They knew he hadn't shown up. They were prepared to write this up, but then again there was the American ambassador at the Presidencia. So the issue was fogged just enough to get over the crisis. And that's the way the flag went up.

HACKMAN: What was the state of the relationship then at the time that the Kennedy Administration came in? Were there still major problems, major changes that you felt would have to take place?

FARLAND: Oh, yes. Actually this was the point—we were just beginning. There were numerous things that had to be done. And this was the reason why I stayed on. I could have gone back into my private activities at that point, but I know had I done so I would have left behind an unfinished task. There was much to be done there. It's a little country with

[-20-]

a lot of big problems. And it's a very wonderful country, but the, sometimes.... We've had such a close relationship with Panama over the years that we've become almost like a feuding family. We know each other's faults too well. And I thought that perhaps we could rectify some of those faults.

HACKMAN: What was the early impact of the Kennedy Administration on them?

FARLAND: Well, as you well know, Kennedy's name is one of, is beloved throughout Latin America. And I come back now full circle to the point where I want to mention the fact that I think the President has a feeling for these people. Look, Jack Kennedy was truly a politician. A politician understands the moods, the attitudes, the concerns, the problems, the worries of people. If he doesn't, he's not going to be in politics very long. And the keynote of the Alliance for Progress gave Latin America the one thing that it hasn't had for so

[-21-]

long. And this I've seen through Panama and through all of Latin America—is the word hope. And people can live a long, long time without bread or water, but they shrivel up and die without hope. And Kennedy brought that word in. There's much to the Alliance that.... Actually, it wasn't a new thing. This thing was part of the Act of Bogota. But he vitalized it. He gave it a meaning that it hadn't had before, and he wanted to indicate to these people that he was interested in it. And they felt that. And as a result there was a wonderful attitude, I think, developed immediately thereafter. You can feel it among the people. Kennedy could have run for office almost in any country in Latin America and been elected.

HACKMAN: What impact did the Bay of Pigs in early '61 have on this?

FARLAND: That was miserable. This hurt beyond anything that has yet been reported, I think, although

[-22-]

there have been lots of reports on it. This was a major mistake. It was set up.... Had it gone through the way it had been planned, this would not have failed. I know certain things by hearsay, but I wasn't privy to much of it. I do know certain things because of my position in Panama. I've learned more than the average ambassador I think—perhaps less than some, but more than the average. I don't know who made the determination in the White House to stop the bombing runs, but this was crucial. As I understand it, there were only a few T-33 trainers left that Castro had, and had these been knocked out, the decision would have been different. I've also heard from a very high source in intelligence that Castro was in the number two tank on the estuary, which may have made a big difference in the future course of events. I know as far as I was concerned that my prestige as the representative of the President of the United States took a

[-23-]

nose dive, and that my colleagues in the Corps were nice enough to say hello, but they couldn't quite understand the attitude of the United States. The word "paper tiger" was thrown around a great deal. A few days after that I went back in the country to a little town by the name of—it slips my mind momentarily—but there was a campesino, drunk, lying up against a cantina wall, and he looked at me and he said, in Spanish, "So you're the American Ambassador." He said, "I think the foreign policy of the United States"—I'll paraphrase what he said, I don't want the transcriber to know—he said, "It stinks. You can't even beat Castro." So you swallow and jolly a little bit. But this was the general attitude throughout Latin America. The Foreign Minister called me in.... No, this was a later date. This was on the missile crisis. But it was a terrible letdown. Everybody felt it.

[-24-]

HACKMAN: In early '61 the Panamanian government had ordered, I believe, the Cuban ambassador to leave. Can you remember making any particular efforts in this direction, or was this something you worked on?

FARLAND: To follow up one more thing on the Bay of Pigs.

HACKMAN: Okay.

FARLAND: I got a call from Time magazine, and... I don't know whether... I forget who it was that called me. It wasn't Jerry Hannifin [Jerry B. Hannifin], but it was somebody, another friend, and he said, "Joe," he said, "we've been sitting up here trying to think who we could call in Latin America that would give us their candid opinion of what this is." He said, "I'll tell you what we think. We think it was a fiasco." And I said, "My thinking is exactly along the same lines. I think it's a fiasco, and if you want to quote me, you're free to do so."

Now as far as the Cuban ambassador. You know

[-25-]

and I know that the ambassadors of the United States are not suppose to interfere in the internal affairs of another country. And of course, we don't. But why are we there? We're there to influence the other country. And I, by a number of means, was able to influence the Republic of Panama, in requesting the Cuban ambassador leave. Yes, I did it.

HACKMAN: Any particular persons you had relationships with that would help on this?

FARLAND: Well, the basic relationship was through the Foreign Office and the President and key people within the government with whom I had made very close friendships.

HACKMAN: Were there any other things like this in the early period, traffic of people going to and from Cuba, that you worked on?

FARLAND: This was an open secret. Panama was historically the bridge, and personnel, indigent citizens from the various countries to the south came up

[-26-]

through there to Tecumen airport and then would go on. The route, and as far as I know it's still open, is through Central America, to Mexico City, from Mexico City to Cuba. To Russia it goes to Curacao and from there behind the Iron Curtain. I think I might as well tell you this, too. I was in the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation], as you know, and my specialty was the so-called hundred cases which dealt with espionage and counterespionage, and the

Communist problem was very much that which I worked on. So I was able to bring a certain amount of expertise in this field to the problem there in Panama.

HACKMAN: Was State as concerned as you were about this, or did you have any problems in your dealings with them on this problem?

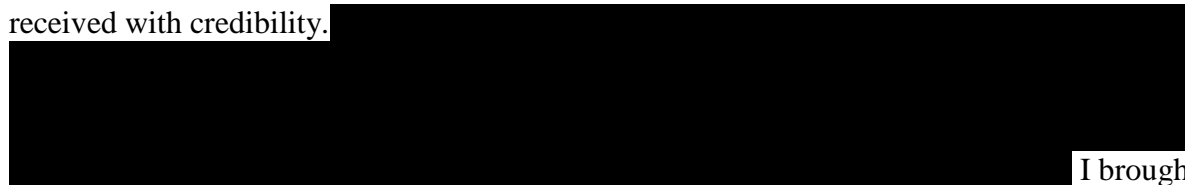
FARLAND: Well, in the Dominican Republic I was able to get together a great deal of information from Trujillo and from Trujillo's intelligence

[-27-]

service concerning Castro's activities. Let's face it, Trujillo had the largest espionage system in the Caribbean, why not take advantage of it if it's to your advantage? One of the things I reported, and I've been told it was the first report that went in to the Department of State, was the documentation, including pictures records and so forth, that Raul Castro had been trained behind the Iron Curtain. The stuff was voluminous. I tried to delete as much as possible, but that wasn't my job. I thought let's get the wheat and the chaff and let someone in Washington do the separation. I finally got a directive from Washington to pay more attention to Trujillo and less to Castro, which I felt was just a little bit out of line because Castro represented a somewhat larger problem, and my source of information was accurate. As far as Panama was concerned, no, I didn't... I think my reporting on the Communist apparatus was

[-28-]

received with credibility.

 I brought about a change. Embassy Panama was a most unusual diplomatic post. It apparently had grown unlike any other post in the world, and had grown unusually because of the proximity of the canal in which at one point the governor was more important than the Minister of the Embassy. At first, it was a legation. There was an overlap which was to our detriment, as a matter of fact. It was a lousy situation, and a situation that I wanted to change. In the first place, prior to my arrival down there, it was publicly reported that the ambassador, the governor, and CINCARIB [Commander-in-Chief, Caribbean] not only were antagonistic to one another but had no communication whatsoever. Julian Harrington requested that he remain

[-29-]

until after General Potter [William E. Potter] left in order to show a certain status. Well, this was unfortunate and had to be changed. And before I went down I had a long talk with Eisenhower about this, and the crux of the decision was while I don't think it's totally

satisfactory, it worked out all right—that the governor would consult with the ambassador on any item that effected U.S. relationships. If agreement was reached the governor would go ahead. If there was a disagreement and it could not be settled, it would go back to the White House for settlement. This was better than it had been before. And then with the governors Bill Carter [William Arnold Carter] and Bob Fleming [Robert John Fleming, Jr.] it worked out without any difficulty whatsoever. Where were we?

HACKMAN: I was going to ask if you can recall the whole matter of traffic to and from Cuba being discussed in any of the meetings with the President that you attended?

[-30-]

FARLAND: I frankly don't remember. I would assume that in the course of conversation, I more than likely made mention of it. But it had been documented on so many occasions that I'm sure that those who should know could not have been any otherwise than privy to it.

HACKMAN: Were there any other particular problems that came up with the Panamanian government during 1961 and '62 on Cuba after the Bay of Pigs thing on getting the...

FARLAND: Well, the missile crisis was of particular consequence. And I got total cooperation from the Panamanians on this. I felt that in this missile crisis we overdid the number of times when the ambassadors were requested to rush off carrying a little yellow telegram in his hot sweaty hand to see the Foreign Minister or the President on some things that were trivial. Of course, I would rather overdo than underdo in a case like that, but there were people who were hitting the

[-31-]

panic buttons all over the place. But I couldn't have asked for closer cooperation. I was on the phone. I was with then President Nino Chiari [Roberto F. Chiari], and I had naturally his private number, and Nino and I, he called me on several things, and I called him. I was over at the Foreign Office to see Galileo Solis, seemingly every hour on the hour. But I think the most significant point about this whole matter was that I was called in by Solis after the final curtain had come down, and he said, "Joe, I want you to know something." He said, "Just like in the Bay of Pigs..." No, he said first, "Joe, you know that we've cooperated fully." And I said, "Galileo, you couldn't have done more." And he said, "Well, just as in the Bay of Pigs," he said, "we would normally have gone to the Assemblée had the United States made definite intervention, and we would have objected oratorically." And he said, "Then I would have called you up, and we would have broken out a bottle of Scotch, and we would have

[-32-]

celebrated a victory.” He said, “I considered the missile crisis no victory for Latin America.” He said, “I want you also to understand that we feel here that we’re in greater danger today than when those missiles were pointed at Washington because,” he said, “what, in effect, you have done is establish another Yalu River behind which Castro and his agents will now operate with impunity.” And he said, “We are now in danger from that point, and we are terribly, terribly concerned.” He said, “I want you to please understand my feelings on this.”

HACKMAN: In early ’61...

FARLAND: Stop this for just a minute, will you. [Tape off, resumed]

HACKMAN: In early ’61, April, at least that’s when it came out in the New York Times, the Panamanian government had developed a social and economic development plan, a five year plan, I believe, which at that time was talked of in terms of being

[-33-]

a model for what an Alliance for Progress...

FARLAND: This was developed by a committee headed by a man by the name of Samudio [David Samudio Avila] who ran for the presidency this last time and was defeated.

HACKMAN: Had you worked with them in putting this together, or some of the ICA [International Cooperation Administration] people, I think? I wondered what your relationships were with ICA at this point.

FARLAND: You mean AID [Agency for International Development].

HACKMAN: Well, at that point it was ICA, it became AID...

FARLAND: Well, it was AID when I was down there, and it’s still AID.

HACKMAN: It was ICA before AID.

FARLAND: It was ICA before, yes.

HACKMAN: Right, and then it became AID in late ’61.

FARLAND: I had very close relationships with AID because I felt that it was a major tool in what we were attempting to accomplish. Now, I tried to change, and I felt that change was necessary in Panama,

[-34-]

because the AID in Panama, when I first arrived, was purely a technical assistance, and more than that had to be done. And I was able to make a redirection away from technical assistance to more active on the job training and more physical contact with people, because from the technical assistance stand point the average Panamanian thought the United States wasn't even there. They knew they had rather a substantial staff, but they spent most of their time swimming at the Panama Hilton.

HACKMAN: I had wondered, you made comment earlier about the size of Panamanian Embassy staff. What was your relationship in general with your staff?

FARLAND: Well, I think I had an exceptionally fine relationship with the staff.

HACKMAN: I had wondered if you had tried to make changes in the type of things they were involved in.

FARLAND: Well, I made one of the changes. For instance, I was talking about the Embassy growing like

[-35-]

Topsy, in a sense sort of different than any other embassy. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

And I assumed that the Ambassador of the United States is in charge of all activities of his government in a foreign country, [REDACTED] And I was gratified, this was one of the things that I was particularly happy about, that Kennedy realized that a change had to be made and after many months came out with a letter spelling out the duties of an ambassador. Well, this is like the Supreme Court telling Christians how to be Christians. I think that it's too bad that it had to be done, and it's too bad that the letter was watered down. It went through every committee

[-36-]

over there at State that you could find until the guts of it had been pretty well deleted. But at least it was a document that gave a direction. [REDACTED] I had rather a short but pointed argument with General Fitch [Alva R. Fitch] saying that I wanted a military attaché, otherwise it would just be a damn shame if I had to issue an order saying that as representative of the President of the United States who is the supreme commander of the armed forces, I was ordering no military personnel to cross that line without registering at the embassy. So he, after thinking quite rapidly about the problem, decided it might be a

good idea to get a military attaché which he did. As far as the other changes concerned and the relationship between agencies, I think, well, I know, as a matter of fact, that our country team was one of the most harmonious in Latin America. We worked as a team.

[-37-]

HACKMAN: Any problems that developed with AID weren't on the country level, then and Alliance for Progress?

FARLAND: Well, the problems with AID developed over direction, and these did develop. I had gone through in West Virginia, the WPA [Works Progress Administration] days, and I thought that I saw at least in one of our activities down there a rebirth. We were trying to train Panamanians to operate heavy equipment, such as bulldozers, cranes, shovels, scrapers, etc., and I've had considerable association with heavy equipment having been a coal miner for almost ten years. Secondly, I think the best way to train a person in that is not to go around a field digging holes and filling them up, but to get a fallout from your effort. And the fallout could be a road, this is road building equipment. Let's start them in the direction and build a road. You teach them not only how to operate but also what to do. So

[-38-]

my first suggestion in this regard was a road which the Panamanians all wanted into a very fertile area to an area that had been completely separated from the main stream of Panamanian life since the beginning of time, and this was the top of the mountain at Toabre. Tombo is the first little village and Toabre the second. So we built an access road. An access road is something that you can get over with a four wheeled truck or a cart or something. Heretofore these poor campesirios had been lugging oranges out of that area on their back, maybe a hundred or.... They'd get down to Penonome and they'd sell their hundred oranges and get a drink of very poor rum or checha, another drink, and that's it. That's their life. But if you get a road in there, just like we did back in the Alleghenies. And I well remember in West Virginia we were still in the mud in the twenties, but it didn't have to be anything, except something over which people could

[-39-]

transit. So we built the road to Toabre, and it cost about five thousand dollars a mile, something like that. Ted Moscoso [Teodoro Moscoso], who is a very knowledgeable individual in economics and social sciences, told me the road would not last through the first rainy season. Well, my answer to Ted was that I would like to bet him a few bucks on that because I had seen roads of this nature built in West Virginia within my life time and people were still going over them, and that some of the roads that were built of that nature later were realigned, but the fact is it opened up the mountain area. Well, he differed with me, but I went about my way and he went his. Incidentally, the last time I was down there, it was about two years ago, the then Minister of Agriculture told me that that road was bringing to the

people of the area which had now become quite populated with industries of citrus, cattle, cottage industries and so forth—bringing people of that area

[-40-]

something like a hundred thousand dollars a year in return. Now since the road had gone in, there had been Bell telephone wires, a single wire put up, and that we were able to build I think it was a fourteen room self-help school at Toabre and another school not quite as large at Tombo, and that people remembered the work of AID. And, incidentally, during the riots down there, there wasn't one AID sign in that whole area that was destroyed or mutilated. And what those signs consisted of was simply this—it hadn't been done before, and I guess I originated it. But I had composed a sign "The people of Panama and the people of the United States, working together, have pooled their resources for the purpose of bringing to this community a road" or a school or something like that. In other words, trying to mesh this rather than indicated the road cost so many thousand dollars paid by the people of the United States.

[-41-]

HACKMAN: At what time did your conversation with Moscoso on this come up? Had this been before it was started or after it was finished or what?

FARLAND: Oh, after. It was after. This was practically in operation at that time. I've always gotten a kick out of this movie The Ugly American. You'll recall the ambassador goes in—did you see the movie?—the ambassador goes into the premier's office, and he says, "What is the great thing that has to be done?" And he says, "We need a road from here to here." And he turns to his AID man and says, "Build that road." At which point when I saw the movie, I said, "Like hell he did." [Laughter]

HACKMAN: Did you get any resistance from your AID staff in Panama on this, or was this just strictly from Washington?

FARLAND: Yes. There was resistance. And I regret that resistance. The man then in charge—he was a very good fellow. As a matter of fact, I liked him very much, but

[-42-]

his whole background was contrary to this type of development. And before I even went down there, I looked at the map. By looking at a map you can learn a lot about a country. And the one thing that was so patent was the fact that there were no roads in Panama. The whole lifeline of this, of Panama, was the Inter-American highway. There is only one road that crosses the isthmus, surprisingly.

HACKMAN: Was that Tench who was the...

FARLAND: No, that was later.

HACKMAN: He was later.

FARLAND: Yes.

HACKMAN: When the study, at the time after you left, when the House subcommittee put together that study, had you realized that study was being done?

FARLAND: No. I was very much amazed at the fact that I, being the principal involved in it, wasn't asked for an opinion. As a matter of fact, I bumped into Tench one day through lunch at the

[-43-]

Jefferson Hotel after I had returned—I and my wife were eating there—and he said, “Well, they surely put it to you, didn't they, old boy?” So I said, “Well, it's nice to know that somebody else realized it.”

HACKMAN: Do you know who the fellows who were working for the House committee talked to?

FARLAND: I've never met them.

HACKMAN: I just wondered who cooperated with them in digging this up.

FARLAND: It would seem to me [Congressman] Dr. Morgan [Thomas E. Morgan] might have indicated that it would have been wise to at least get the other side of the story. But this apparently was not the purpose of the investigation. No. I felt quite disgruntled about this.

HACKMAN: How did the idea for the President...

FARLAND: Oh, incidentally, the idea behind this road to continue on down the Coche del Norete—and I'd have to show you on a map, too involved to explain verbally—would have opened up the east coast, and

[-44-]

the difficulty also was not only with AID on this, but certain politicians in Panama who had land holdings of substantial amount in another direction wanted the road, but they wanted it to go through their property. And also, I had been assured by Nino Chiari that land grabbing would not be the order of the day. The effort was stopped when land grabbers moved in and

the government did nothing about it. Otherwise it would have gone on. This was the basic reason why I didn't go any further than I did down there.

BEGIN SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE

HACKMAN: Let me take off on something else. How did the President of Panama's trip to the United States in '62 develop?

FARLAND: Well, the development covered a number of months, and I don't recall all of those steps, but the final request came that he, President Chiari, desires a meeting with President Kennedy in Washington for the purpose of discussing the 1903

[-45-]

treaty. And after much backing and filling diplomatically on the part of both governments, the arrangements came off. And I came up ahead of time and had a number of meetings with the President, lengthy conversations, briefings. And in these briefings there were opposite points of view presented by, particularly by Ed Martin [Edwin M. Martin], and I was critical of certain of the AID situations, which I made mention of. And I must say, in all candor, I couldn't have had more support from the President than I received.

HACKMAN: Were these points that you had been making to State as things had been developing—do you want to go into particularly what you saw differently than they did?

FARLAND: Well, it was just a lack of understanding of the problems. To be specific would take much more time than I have now. I may be able to fill in with you later on this. But basically, we had a situation that was becoming untenable.

[-46-]

Whether or not we had a legal right is one thing, whether or not we had a moral right is another thing, or whether or not in the light of developments of the world situation we had rights would have been a third thing. The basic problem was that the Panamanians, being a small country, having a very highly developed inferiority complex nationally, wanted to be considered partners with the United States in this waterway. Now this did not mean financially, although they yelled for that, but they wanted to be at least acknowledged on an equal. They, like the minority groups today, do not want to be considered a second rate citizen or a second rate nation. Their sense of national pride is exaggerated, but it is there, and it is a fact of life. And I felt that the State Department didn't quite understand that, and that we had to do that which could be done without being detrimental to the U.S. position because that would be

[-47-]

the least of my interest. But if we could do something which would be mutually beneficial, and solve mutual problems, why not do it? After all this relationship with Panama is one that harkens back a long ways to the point where, let's face it, it was Teddy Roosevelt [Theodore Roosevelt] that brought that country into being. So I came up and had these conversations and made certain points, and was supported by the President.

HACKMAN: In your earlier dealings with State when you failed to get a response from them on some of these things, was there any way at that point you could go to the President directly without coming up? Any channel you could use at all?

FARLAND: No, this is what I made reference to in the very beginning. A political appointee has one very strong asset, and that is the back door key. When you don't have that back door key, your usefulness is limited. And I had no back door key.

[-48-]

HACKMAN: How did Carl Kaysen come into the picture? Did you have any previous dealings with him?

FARLAND: I didn't know Carl from Adam. But my telegrams were engendering a great deal of commotion here in Washington, and President Kennedy sent Carl down to take a look at what was developing in Embassy Panama, and why all this commotion, what the facts were. Carl came down and told me very frankly in a matter of about five hours that after the conversations he'd had that he strongly supported the position which I was advocating. And of course, he had the President's ear, and so reported back.

HACKMAN: Did he ever explain why Ralph Dungan [Ralph A. Dungan] who usually was on Latin American things, didn't get this assignment, and how he happened to get involved?

FARLAND: No, he didn't. No. I don't recall any mention of that.

HACKMAN: Can you remember anything particular about these meetings, particularly the long one you had there

[-49-]

with Martin and the desk officer McManus [Neil McManus], and Katherine Bracken [Katherine W. Bracken] and these people? How the President conducted it and what particularly was discussed?

FARLAND: Well, if I recall correctly, this June 9 meetings was just prior to Chiari's arrival.

HACKMAN: Right.

FARLAND: And during that meeting there were a number of things discussed. I mentioned the fact, and I see Henry DuFlow's name on here, who was representing AID at the time.... I believe he was.

HACKMAN: Right. He was.

FARLAND: And I mentioned to the President that there were, I forget the exact number, I think five or so, but there was a very limited number of contract officers in AID. And I pointed out that those contract officers, working totally on Panama, couldn't do the job, let alone for the rest of Latin America,

[-50-]

that the limitation there constituted a bottleneck that was affecting the entire AID program in Latin America. Well, I also said that I felt that if we could up the ante by about five million dollars in payment of our annuity, this would give us the time for the further studying of the Panama Canal on a sea level route dug by nuclear energy. AID didn't like the fact that I'd taken this to the President, and I understood that George Ball [George W. Ball] didn't like the fact that I'd been specific as to a figure. Why I'm not too sure. I thought we were all working together for a common cause.

HACKMAN: Had you been aware that this Ball group was working on the Canal free treaty question and had been formulating some ideas in this direction?

FARLAND: Oh, yes. I'd been on—I'd called back and attended a number of the meetings. The first was headed by.... Well, they had three different chairmen.

[-51-]

HACKMAN: It wouldn't have been Bowles [Chester B. Bowles] when he was Under Secretary?

FARLAND: Well, Ball was one, at one time. I remember he chaired the meeting, and before that it was—Bob Woodward [Robert Forbes Woodward] was at one time.

HACKMAN: Right. Assistant Secretary.

FARLAND: And I forget who chaired the third. My first conversation with Ed Martin was in one of those meetings, at which point I mentioned the fact that a figure between three and five million would be somewhere along the line I thought would be appropriate. At which point Ed indicated that they weren't going to get anything whatsoever. So that sort of represented his attitude throughout our entire relationship. But this work was going on. There's no question. I was getting the playback, and I was contributing to it. So this wasn't unknown to me.

HACKMAN: At the time of this visit in '62 wasn't there a ten million dollar grant announced? Was this for the

[-52-]

purpose that you were talking about, or how did this come about?

FARLAND: Well, this was not exactly the way I would have wanted to see it. This originated in the Department and was not at the suggestion of the Embassy. Here again where I feel things could be done a little differently in the Department, this ten million dollar grant was announced to the Embassy by telegram. This was one of the things we were going to offer. But the Embassy never had a chance to really go into this thing in depth or think it out. As a matter of fact at this juncture, I've forgotten most of the terms of it. But it didn't serve the purpose.

HACKMAN: I had heard that the basic disagreement was in how much of this aid was going to be given only if the Panamanian government used it for specific purposes rather than a general grant of sorts. Do you remember this entering into it at all?

FARLAND: No. I don't remember that frankly. I wanted to

[-53-]

see every cent that we spent down there channeled directly into the hands of the people. I did not like, and I've voiced this on many occasions. I had Panamanians come to me, little people, and say, "Please do not give my government any further funds. Please don't. It stops too far up. It doesn't get to the people." I wanted to see some projects undertaken in which we worked with the Panamanians for specifics. And one of the things I suggested.... It's coming back slowly. I mean I've been away from this for some time. But I wanted to see a bank type of set up established for industrial development, part of these funds that would be paid as annuity would go into this, and administered for the purpose of where the people would benefit by it. I think that one of my objections to the AID program as such has been too much on a government to government basis and not enough on a government to people. And I took real issue with this at a meeting of

[-54-]

the ambassadors in, I guess it was Salvador. I made an impassioned plea for this, but I got nowhere with it. One of the things I was anxious to do, and I still think it's important, and our government here in the United States is doing it today in the ghettos, is to set up vocational training schools. This is what Latin America needs. They have plenty of lawyers; they have plenty of economists; they have plenty of Phi Beta Kappa who are sitting in the park plotting revolution. But they don't have enough people who can fix refrigerators, or lay brick, or install a water system. And the Governor and I worked on a project to do this for Central America in some vacant buildings over in the Zone near Colon that could have been part of this thing, and it was turned down because at that point the philosophy in AID was against vocational training. That's the way it goes.

HACKMAN: What was the reaction of the Chiari government

[-55-]

to your proposal for using the annuity rather than the AID grant to the government?

FARLAND: Well, in the first place, any time a President comes to the United States he has to go back with some goodies. This is why he comes, and it's known beforehand, and it's recognized, and it's regrettable, but that's the way the ground rules have been established. The first thing where the problem was was in—I hate to mention this, [Laughter] but—it was in the flag flying. They wanted a few more flags to be flown. And unfortunately, the Brucker syndrome was still extant. And the first draft came out that I saw of our joint communiqué written by the U.S. that they would fly one more flag. And Mr. Martin and I had a verbal acrimonious disagreement on this. I didn't like the communiqué at all. It didn't solve the purpose. It only aggravated it. I'd rather have nothing than that. So that night Carl Kaysen and I and a fellow by the name of

[-56-]

Ruben Carles [Ruben D. Carles] and, I think, Galileo Solis met in my hotel room in the Jefferson Hotel, and we wrote a communiqué until about 4 o'clock in the morning. Carl took it back to the White House, and word was sent over to State, and I'm sitting at the desk of the Desk Officer, and Ed calls me and wants to know what in the hell, who I thought I was and what I was doing. And I told him I was too damn tired to fight at this juncture. I'd been up most of the night, and we'd arrived at the conclusion, and if he didn't like it, my job was available. And he, apparently because the White House put the stamp of approval on it, didn't attempt to change it too much. But that was clear back to the flag issue. We raised a few more flags, and the issue died. As one Panamanian said, with typical Panamanian candor, he said, "Tell the Panamanians, tell us that we can raise flags any place in the Zone, but we have to pay for them." He said, "At that point, we forget it." [Laughter]

[-57-]

HACKMAN: What do you know of the meetings of the two Presidents at this point? How well did they get on?

FARLAND: Well, they met twice; once here in Washington, and once in San Jose. The meetings were, I thought, were very good. Chiari is not an active extrovert. He speaks fairly good English, but his whole nature is one of trying to find a middle course and stay back behind someplace. And needless to say, you know the personality of the President. So the meeting was, of course, dominated by President Kennedy, who was exceptionally frank. I mean to the point where there were those in the Department of State who were terribly shocked because in the course of these meetings on four occasions, he said, "We've already recognized the fact that you have sovereignty in the Canal Zone." He said, "You know we raised one flag, but," he said, "we sort of did that in the middle of the night, didn't we?"

[-58-]

He said, "But actually this is no longer an issue." And of course, this was... [Congressman] Flood [Daniel J. Flood] would have had a heart attack had he been privy to that conversation. But Chiari was not satisfied to the extent he had hoped for. He wanted to be the one to be remembered as having reached the conclusion of this long session since 1903. He didn't reach it. He and the President discussed this one point, and this is a point that has not been—it's known, but it's not been publicized. As a matter of fact, it's not well known at all. President Kennedy told President Chiari, "I know you want to renegotiate the 1903 Treaty, but," he said, "in your country, this is good politics." He said, "In my country, I don't think it's good politics. The timing is bad for consideration of this." He said, "Furthermore, there's a complication which I think is overriding." He said, "We have been for some time studying the use of

[-59-]

nuclear energy for the purpose of digging a sea level canal." He said, "This canal presumably will be dug in Panama." He said, "Commerce is coming to the extent where we think this is necessary, and there is a terminal date somewhere in the future on the present facility. We are presently having a study made of the technical feasibility and economic feasibility of such a canal." And he said, "This study is going to take more or less five years. Now at the end of that period, let us assume that the study is favorable, which we think it will be from the facts we have on hand," he said, "we will need a complete new treaty. Now there are those who question that, but this is what the... At which point the 1903 Treaty becomes moot. So why drag out into the open the scars of yesteryears when we start afresh without the inhibitions and the memories and the controversies and cantankerous problems that have grown up over this period? We

[-60-]

start fresh.” And he said, “In the meantime,” he said, “let us between us establish a high level commission for the purpose of discussing, within the perimeter of the 1903 Treaty, the points of irritation that are presently extant.” He said, “We can do that. It will give rise to a better understanding between us, and in the meantime our studies go forward, and we’ll look forward to a better relationship as a result of a whole new change in our position.” Well, Chiari bought it, and he bought it on the premise that the United States was going to use nuclear energy for the purpose of digging a canal in Panama. Well, he went to New York and I went with him. And he wanted in his speech to the Panamanian people to disclose the entire conversation. And I had to get deeply involved in an argument in the Waldorf Astoria with him and a couple of his cohorts, and finally convinced them that this was not the political thing to do, that you speak

[-61-]

on the basis of the.... If he wants to say “I told the President this, I told the President that, I told the President....” I said, “That’s your prerogative, Nino. You can do this. But you cannot diplomatically say the President told me. The President will speak for himself. You speak for yourself. Now,” I said, “if you do this otherwise, you’re overstepping bounds of political propriety, and I think you’re making one hell of a mistake.” Well, he didn’t do it. And he went back. Sometime I’ll tell you the story of how he got back. This was a real riot. We almost stopped in Cuba. It would have been a very unhappy situation. We lost an engine over Havana, and he almost lost the presidency of Panama as a result. Next time I talk to you, I’ll tell you that story.

HACKMAN: Alright. Sticking with this, the President’s desire to give this speech in New York. Can you remember at that point the

[-62-]

rewriting of the communiqué to any extent, or the document that came out from Kaysen, or whoever it was in Washington...

FARLAND: Kaysen was the primary. I mean the authorship was that night. Kaysen took the copy over to the White House. And that was it. It wasn’t changed very much. There was one word, one or two words that were batted around a little bit, but I’d have to refresh my memory. There was no major change.

HACKMAN: Was this something that you had called Kaysen on, or did the State Department get involved to any extent in the argument back and forth on the change, or do you recall that?

FARLAND: Well, I think it was a mutually discussed thing. It wasn’t acrimonious or anything of that nature. And I think the Panamanians were interested in it, too. And we had to reach a.... They wanted perhaps a little different

wording. We wanted it a little different. It was a matter of semantics. In essence, the gist of it wasn't changed.

[-63-]

HACKMAN: Can you remember anything particularly about the social events that took place during Chiari's visit, that visit up here?

FARLAND: Oh, there were some very nice things held for him. He was given the red rug treatment. Blair House, of course, was available, and they enjoyed that very much. There was a luncheon at the White House hosted by the President. The Panamanian gave one dinner which was nothing out of the ordinary, a typical diplomatic dinner. And then we went to New York, and he got a ticker tape parade with which he was very thrilled. That's something to behold. And because there are so many Latinos in New York and in the business district, the crowd was quite friendly and very Spanish, and, you know, "Vive Chiari," etc., etc. They had a good time. The First National City Bank held a dinner in the bank building there on Park Avenue. And David Rockefeller [David Rockefeller, Sr.] hosted a luncheon the last day at his home in upper New York State, on the Rocke-

[-64-]

feller conclave. Then to make this possible we had to get a copter in to fly over to La Guardia to get Air Force II, and we got to Miami fifteen minutes ahead of schedule, and there were a lot of Panamanians there to wish him well. And he overstayed fifteen minute departure, and that's when we got on this one airplane called the VIP Airling, the only plane they had, Panamanian registry. We set sail for Panama. And one hour later we were back in Miami with a very nervous President. He had only asked for so many days limited to the hour for the right to be away from Panama. Under the Constitution you have to ask for it. And he had asked just to the last minute, and there we sat in Miami, and the minutes are ticking off, and they were getting awful close to midnight.

HACKMAN: As you were trying to.... Were there any problems in working out the arrangements for this trip with State? Would they have rather

[-65-]

have put this thing off rather than bring it to a head at this point?

FARLAND: Well, my guess, Larry, is that few if any trips are welcomed with open arms. They're usually a matter of forced situations that come about through pressures from various sources.

HACKMAN: Did you have any particular help that you can recall in this instance?

FARLAND: No. Frankly, I would have liked to have postponed it because I didn't think it was going to be particularly productive. But once the President says he wants to go, what do you do? You have to at least record what's the situation. And it had to come to a head. It couldn't have gone any further, and the solution—of course, the decisions which were reached finally broke down. There was no solution. But it cleared the air a little bit, and I think clouded up some, also.

HACKMAN: In working out this approach which President Kennedy

[-66-]

took in the meetings on the five year study that was necessary, was this something that you basically agreed with, or I had wondered if you felt...

FARLAND: No, my briefing to him was based on this and also on the appointment of this high level commission, and these were things I not only.... Some were my ideas, all of which I was in accord with, those other ideas that were suggested at the time.

HACKMAN: You talked before, I believe in the period before the Kennedy Administration came in, about your problems of communicating with the State Department. Did this continue to this extent under the Kennedy Administration, particularly with the desk officer and the officer in charge of the area?

FARLAND: If you've been at this any length of time, you know that the word desk officer comes up quite often. I think it's one of the most important posts in the State Department. I'm strongly

[-67-]

convinced that in that post State should do everything that it can to put a highly competent qualified man because, in essence, this is your relation, your line of communication on at least day to day problems which can be extremely important in the long run. For instance, Flood tacks on a rider to an appropriation bill naming the new bridge the Thatcher [Maurice Hudson Thatcher] Ferry Bridge. Well, when this came out, I sent an immediate wire up there saying that, "Do something about this now because this is the type of thing that can create a head of steam that could develop into anything. Please do something about it." Well, this comes through your desk officer. I mean this is not, the fire isn't there yet. This is something the ambassador's dreamed up. Well, it got put in the in box and got down to the bottom some place. And I finally got a "Well, we can't do anything now, the problem is, you know, a few steps, months away." Well, the net result

[-68-]

is that nothing was done, and George came down to dedicate the bridge, and we almost had a riot. It came close. It came awfully close. Here again is just a lack of.... The President asked Carl and me, first he asked Carl to go over and see Thatcher and ask him if he would withdraw his name. And then he turned to me, and he said, "Hey, hey. Farland, I want you to go with Carl. I want this to be bipartisan. I've got to get you Republicans mixed up in this thing." He said, "I'm going to give you a letter, and you go over and see what you can do." Well, I knew it was too late. The poor old man is way up in years and this was something. And he said, "If you had asked me sooner, but," he said, "all my friends now, they wouldn't understand." I was talking to Carl about that a few weeks ago. The desk officer position in State, I think is extremely important. I hope the day will come when they upgrade that. There have been desk officers I know of that have never been to the

[-69-]

country. They can't possibly understand the problems. And these boys are not, and should not be, glorified office boys. They shouldn't be because the station they hold is a.... My thinking would be that after you serve, say, in the political section in the country for three years and either one or two posts politically, you come back and take over the desk for a period of time and then move on because by doing that, you have a continuity and a thought process that you don't have otherwise. I got off your question someplace.

HACKMAN: You talked about Kaysen coming down to see you in Panama. How had the President become aware of the problem in communications? Had Mac Bundy's [McGeorge Bundy] operation been getting in on the cables and pulling them out?

FARLAND: I don't know how he did it. I was never told. I never asked Carl why. The cables were becoming quite sharp, and I thought the situation was deteriorating quite rapidly and that something

[-70-]

had to be done. Either that or remove me, because as long as an ambassador is in office, regardless of what his own personal point of view is, while he does everything he can through channels, he does not publicly voice opposition. He should resign. And I think that's his only recourse.

HACKMAN: I wondered if some of the other people who might have been supporting your point of view, General Carter who you apparently had good relationships with and maybe it had come up through the other channel, the Joint Chiefs side, or Secretary of Army's side or something like this.

FARLAND: Well, one, I am quite sure that Steve Ailes [Stephen Ailes], who was an old classmate of mine.... Steve and I thought much alike on this thing. And of course, Steve was then Under Secretary and while Elvis Stahr

[Elvis Jacob Stahr, Jr.]—Elvis and I are very close friends, and I've very sorry to hear

[-71-]

that he just resigned from Indiana, but he wrote me a letter telling me why—but he knew some of it although he was gone before we got down to the nitty gritty. But Steve knew it, and some of the... Well, I presume somewhere along the line perhaps George Ball, or maybe Dean Rusk, had made mention of the situation. After all Panama for a small country represents a very important link in our military, in our economic, and in our whole posture position with Latin America.

HACKMAN: Did you see any change in response from—well, Tom Mann left, and then there was a period when there wasn't an Assistant Secretary, then Woodward, then Ed Martin. What were the changes, if any, in the response you were getting or were things getting up that high?

FARLAND: Well, Bob and I always got along fine, I mean I have no—Bob and I have been old friends. As a matter of fact, he went with me on the delegation for the inauguration of Hector Trujillo, he came over from

[-72-]

Costa Rica with me. Ed and I didn't see eye to eye. This is the crux of it, and I'm sure he'd be the first to admit it, and I am too. Nothing personal in this, but we just disagree on our approach to certain things in Latin America and particularly in Panama.

HACKMAN: It's 1 o'clock.

FARLAND: Oh, I better break it off.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[-73-]

Joseph S. Farland Oral History Transcript – JFK #1
Name List

A

Ailes, Stephen, 71, 72
Arias, Arnulfo, 7

B

Ball, George W., 51, 52, 69, 72
Bowles, Chester B., 52
Bracken, Katherine W., 50
Brucker, Wilber M., 13, 56
Bundy, McGeorge, 70

C

Carles, Ruben D., 57
Carter, William Arnold, 30, 71
Castro, Fidel, 4, 23, 24, 28, 33
Castro, Raul, 28
Chiari, Roberto F., 32, 45, 50, 58, 59, 61, 62, 64,
65, 66

D

de la Guardia, Ernesto, Jr., 15, 17-20
DuFlow, Henry, 50
Dulles, John Foster, 3
Dungan, Ralph A., 49

E

Eisenhower, Dwight D., 12, 30

F

Fitch, Alva R., 37
Fleming, Robert John, Jr., 30
Flood, Daniel J., 59, 68

H

Hannifin, Jerry B., 25
Harrington, Julian F., 12, 29

K

Kaysen, Carl, 49, 56, 57, 63, 69, 70

Kennedy, John F., 1, 2, 3, 5, 10, 11, 20, 21, 22, 30,
36, 45, 46, 48-51, 58-62, 64, 66, 67, 69, 70

M

Mann, Thomas Clifton, 7, 9, 10, 72
Marino, Mike, 16, 19
Martin, Edwin M., 46, 50, 52, 56, 57, 72, 73
McManus, Neil, 50
Morgan, Thomas E., 44
Moscoso, Teodoro, 40, 42

P

Potter, William E., 30

R

Randolph, Jennings, 3
Rockefeller, David, Sr., 64
Rooney, John J., 9, 10
Roosevelt, Theodore, 48
Rubottom, Roy R., Jr., 5, 7
Rusk, Dean, 72

S

Samudio Avila, David, 34
Solis, Galileo, 6, 7, 32, 57
Stahr, Elvis Jacob, Jr., 71, 72

T

Tench, 42, 43
Thatcher, Maurice Hudson, 68, 69
Trujillo Molina, Rafael Leonidas, 3, 4, 27, 28, 72

W

Woodward, Robert F., 52, 72