

**Lincoln Gordon Oral History Interview – JFK#1, 05/30/1964**  
Administrative Information

**Creator:** Lincoln Gordon  
**Interviewer:** John E. Rielly  
**Date of Interview:** May 30, 1964  
**Place of Interview:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil  
**Length:** 144 pages plus addendum

**Biographical Note**

(1913 - 2009) Member, John F. Kennedy's Task Force on Immediate Latin American Problems (1960); Ambassador to Brazil (1961 - 1966), discusses JFK's interest in Latin American Affairs, functions of the ambassador position, Latin and South American politics, and Brazilian government during the time of the 1964 coup, among other issues.

**Access**

Open.

**Usage Restrictions**

According to the deed of gift signed September 30, 1981, 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 The copyright law extends its protection to unpublished works from the moment of creation in a tangible form.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**

Lincoln Gordon, recorded interview by John E. Rielly, May 30, 1964, (page number),  
John F. Kennedy Library Oral History Program.

## AGREEMENT ON USE OF ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

I, LINCOLN GORDON (name), of BELMONT,  
MASSACHUSETTS (place), assign to the United States of America  
 for administration by the John F. Kennedy Library, Inc., all my rights, title  
 and interest in the tape recording and transcript of the interview conducted  
 with me at RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL (place)  
 by JOHN F. RIELLY (interviewer) on behalf of  
 the John F. Kennedy Library, on 30 MAY, 1964.

Subject to any conditions specified by me limiting access to those  
 materials and set forth in writing on the transcript prior to its being  
 forwarded for the Library, such transcript and recording may be made  
 available for research, dissemination, reproduction, publication and other  
 appropriate use, in whole or in part, as determined by the Director of  
 the Library.

(signed)

(Date)

Lincoln GordonMay 30, 1964

Accepted:

(signed)

(date)

Wesley FaxonJanuary 28, 1965

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION  
NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE

JOHN F. KENNEDY LIBRARY

Legal Agreement Pertaining to the Oral History Interview of  
Lincoln Gordon

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, Craig VanGrasstek of Washington, D.C. do hereby give, donate and convey to the United States of America all my rights, title, and interest in the transcript of a personal interview I conducted with Lincoln Gordon in September 1980, 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 available for use by researchers as soon as it has been deposited in the John F. Kennedy Library.
2. I hereby assign to the United States Government all copyright I may have in the interview transcript.
3. Copies of the transcript may be provided by the Library to researchers upon request.
4. Copies of the transcript may be deposited in or loaned to institutions other than the John F. Kennedy Library.

Donor

*Craig VanGrasstek*

Date

*9.1.81*

Archivist of the United States

*Robert W. Stone*

Date

*September 30, 1981*

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION  
NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE

JOHN F. KENNEDY LIBRARY

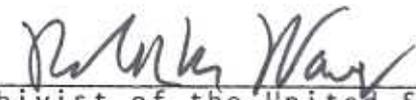
Legal Agreement Pertaining to the Oral History Interview of  
Lincoln Gordon

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44, United States Code, and subject to the terms and condition hereinafter set forth, I, Lincoln Gordon, of Washington, D.C., do hereby give, donate and convey to the United States of America all my rights, title, and interest in the transcript of a personal interview conducted by Craig VanGrasstek in September 1980, 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 available for use by researchers as soon as it has been deposited in the John F. Kennedy Library.
2. I hereby assign to the United States Government all copyright I may have in the interview transcript.
3. Copies of the transcript may be provided by the Library to researchers upon request.
4. Copies of the transcript may be deposited in or loaned to institutions other than the John F. Kennedy Library.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Donor

16 September 1981  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Archivist of the United States

September 30, 1981  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Lincoln Gordon – JFK #1

### Table of Contents

<u>Page</u>	<u>Topic</u>
2	Initial association with John F. Kennedy [JFK]
3	Role in the Latin American Task Force in Cambridge, MA in 1960
4, 8	Role in the Berle Task Force
5	Establishment of the Alliance for Progress
7	Role in the Act for International Development
11	The Kennedy administration getting involved in Latin American affairs
13	Appointments to Latin American positions in the administration
17	1961 South American tour with Adlai E. Stevenson
24, 30	Discussion of the Punta del Este conference
28	The Cuban issue in the Punta del Este conference
31	Appointment as U.S. Ambassador to Brazil
38	U.S. awareness of the development of Northeast Brazil
41	Public opinion of JFK in Brazil
43	Structure of the Brazilian government and working relationship with leaders
44	Appointment of Teodoro Moscoso as coordinator for the Alliance for Progress
45, 53	Visit of Brazilian President João Goulart to the United States
50	Brazilian attitudes towards U.S. policies on military governments
57	Meeting with JFK on July 30, 1962
58	Brazilian reaction to the Cuban Missile Crisis
59	Restoration of the Presidential system in Brazil and its effects
64	Meeting between Goulart and JFK in Rome
66	Brazilian opinion of U.S. foreign involvement
67	Actions after the assassination and Brazilian reaction to it
71	Comments on JFK's personality and qualities as a leader
74	JFK's support of ambassadors
75	Personal and working relationships with White House staff members
76	Comments on JFK's foreign policy views and Latin American policies
78	Popularity of the Kennedy family in Brazil
80	Comments on longevity of the Alliance for Progress

Oral History Interview

With

Ambassador Lincoln Gordon

May 30, 1964

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

By John E. Rielly

For the John F. Kennedy Library

This is the beginning of the interview for the Kennedy [John F. Kennedy] Oral History Project with Ambassador Lincoln Gordon, United States Ambassador in Brazil, during most of the Kennedy era. The interview takes place in the Ambassador's study at his residence in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. It is being conducted by John E. Rielly, Foreign Policy Assistant to Senator Hubert H. Humphrey, on May 30, 1964.

[-1-]

RIELLY: Mr. Ambassador, you knew Kennedy before he was elected President. Where did you first know him? Did you know him when he was a student at Harvard? What was your association with him during the period at the university?

GORDON: My acquaintance with President Kennedy was actually very small before he became President. I did not know him when he was a student, although at the time he went to Harvard I was just beginning as an instructor in the Government Department there. Unlike many of my Harvard colleagues who have been active in the administration I had nothing to do with the campaign. We met casually two or three times when he was a Senator. I did have one brief interview with him for an educational television program on foreign aid, which was, as I recall it, sometime in early 1959. But that was a very casual meeting. So we were not really personally acquainted before his election.

RIELLY: Were you a member of the informal Brain Trust that was located in Cambridge chiefly made up of members of the Harvard-MIT faculties that advised Kennedy on various subjects before or actually before the election?

GORDON: I was very friendly with this group, which included people like Galbraith [John Kenneth Galbraith] and Schlesinger [Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.], Max Millikan [Max F. Millikan] and

[-2-]

Walt Rostow [Walt Whitman Rostow] at MIT and some at the Harvard Law School as well. I was asked to write one or two papers in the field of foreign aid and foreign trade. I did supply some material at that time but I could not call myself an active member of the group. I was a friendly outside collaborator.

RIELLY: We were told that some of the early plans for the Alliance for Progress were formulated at a meeting of a Latin American seminar or Latin American group which met in Cambridge in 1960. I believe it was chaired by Bill Barnes [William Barnes]. Were you a member of that group?

GORDON: Yes, I was an active member of that group.

RIELLY: What was the date?

GORDON: It was late in 1960 after election time. I think it was probably late November or early December. But I don't actually believe that group had much to do with the thinking. In a sense what that group did was to ratify some thinking that had already been crystallized. The thinking about the Alliance for Progress, which I had a good deal to do with, was developed over a period, in a broad sense a period of years. In the short term immediate sense, it was developed in the first so-called Berle [Adolf A. Berle, Jr.] Task Force, of

[-3-]

which I was the economic member. This began in late November of 1960 and finished its report over a long week end in Puerto Rico at New Year's time in 1961 because we were all invited to be present at the fourth inauguration of Governor Muñoz Marin [Luis Muñoz Marin]. You will find in the economic chapter of that report the essential outlines of what later became the Alliance for Progress proposals of President Kennedy.

The Cambridge meeting, which took place at the Harvard Faculty Club, included Bill Barnes as an active promoter and also included as one of the most active members a Washington lawyer, Peter Nehemkis. It produced a published manifesto which was

completely in line with the thinking that was in the early Task Force report to President Kennedy. In a sense I was the link between these two documents.

RIELLY: Is it your view then that the work of the Berle Task Force was the most important groundwork for the Alliance for Progress?

GORDON: In the sense of crystallizing the thinking which President Kennedy accepted and incorporated into his own proposals.

RIELLY: Had any members of the Berle Task Force been working with the U.S. government in preparing the Act of Bogota?

[-4-]

GORDON: No. The Berle Task Force consisted of Berle as chairman and Dick Goodwin [Richard N. Goodwin] representing President-elect Kennedy at the time, Teddy Moscoso [Teodoro Moscoso] and Arturo Morales Carrion both from Puerto Rico, Robert Alexander, a specialist on Latin American labor problems from Rutgers University, Professor Arthur Whitaker [Arthur Preston Whitaker] from the University of Pennsylvania, who was an expert on the evolution of the Pan American Union and the Organization of American States, and myself. None of us had been working on the Act of Bogota.

I had been following Latin American affairs very closely for some period of time. I was deeply involved in a research project on Brazilian economic development at that time and I was thoroughly familiar with the Act of Bogota and indeed drew heavily on its thinking in drafting the material for the Berle Task Force. But the Task Force in a sense was a transmission belt for thinking that had been developed mainly by Latin Americans, some in ECLA (Economic Commission for Latin America), some by American economists such as Paul Rosenstein-Rodan concerned with economic policy toward Latin America, some out of the experience with aid programs in developing countries generally, and some from the work

[-5-]

that went into the Act of Bogota where the social element was given especially great emphasis. This was reduced by the Task Force to a short crystallized form which President-elect Kennedy read and approved.

He then asked several of us to continue working on the development of these ideas after his election. So the Task Force, I think, played a vital part, but you should also bear in mind that the Task Force only met a few times. I drafted this economic chapter and with very few modifications it was accepted by the Task Force in our discussions. But I certainly don't claim originality for these ideas. These ideas were simply the distillation of a good deal of thinking, at least as much Latin American as North American, which had been gradually evolving over the years.

RIELLY: To what extent did the proposal of Kubitschek [Juscelino Kubitschek de Oliveira], Operation Pan America, figure in the thinking in preparation for the Alliance for Progress?

GORDON: Well, it was an important link in the chain. The Kubitschek proposal as such was quite vague. The basic idea was that there should be a basic political dedication to inter-American collaboration in the economic field. This led to various discussions

[-6-]

in a group called the "Committee of Twenty-one." Out of it came the American decision to accept a long-standing Latin American proposal for the creation of an Inter-American Bank. Out of it basically also came the meeting in Bogota which produced the Act of Bogota and our commitment to finance social progress efforts which was made shortly before the 1960 election.

You will recall that the then Under Secretary of State, Mr. Dillon [C. Douglas Dillon], asked Congress on the eve of the Bogota meeting for authority to commit \$500 million from the United States as the first step in support for social progress projects. That was done, but the appropriations were secured only in 1961 after the Kennedy administration came into power. But there is no doubt that the Kubitschek initiative, which hadn't been terribly warmly received by the Eisenhower [Dwight D. Eisenhower] administration, but was persisted in by various Latin Americans, was an important link in this chain of events which led to the Alliance for Progress.

RIELLY: During the period shortly after the inauguration in 1961 were you also involved in advisory work and perhaps work beyond that with regard to the reformulation of the foreign aid program world-wide, and in the preparation of the new Act for International

[-7-]

Development? Could you tell us something about what role you played in that?

GORDON: Yes. If I could retrace for a moment, I should say that I have no idea who suggested to Berle that I should be a member of his Task Force. I got a telephone call one day in November 1960 from Berle and that was followed immediately by one from Ted Sorensen [Theodore C. Sorensen] confirming it officially on behalf of the President-elect. About five days before the inauguration, shortly after he had been named as the future Secretary of State, Dean Rusk asked me to visit him in Washington. He invited me to become Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs. I refused on a number of grounds, including the fact that Edwin Martin [Edwin M. Martin], who then had the job, was an exceptionally competent man and I saw no reason for a change in that job. In fact, Martin was kept on by the new administration in that particular post.

I volunteered at that time to work on a part-time basis with the State Department and the administration in further developing the ideas of the Alliance for Progress, and that was accepted. I started at that shortly after the inauguration. I spent at least half time, rather more than half, working in Washington. Fortunately,

[-8-]

I was supposed to be doing research at Harvard that year rather than teaching, so that I did not have fixed classes to meet.

The work involved three phases. Under Secretary George Ball [George W. Ball] asked me to take over the presentation to the House Appropriations and Senate Appropriations Committee of the \$500 million appropriation for the Act of Bogota, which I did. That involved first organizing the written presentation, and then making the oral presentations to the Committees. The second phase was developing further the ideas of the Alliance for Progress which meant among other things a good deal of drafting on the March 13 speech. The final drafting of that was done by Dick Goodwin but the ideas for the substantive content came right out of the Task Force report and the further thinking in Washington. I also drafted the President's message on the Act of Bogota appropriation.

In April 1961, I came here to Rio with the delegation to the Inter-American Bank Governors' meeting led by Secretary Dillon in order to work with Raúl Prebisch, with Jorge Sol [Jorge Sol Castellanos], who was then the Assistant Secretary General of the OAS, and with Felipe Herrera, the president of the Inter-American Bank, on the agenda for what later came to be the Punta del Este meeting. That was followed by

[-9-]

the development of position papers for the U.S. delegation and the first draft of what became the Charter of Punta del Este. There a good deal of work was done by John Leddy [John M. Leddy], who was Assistant Secretary of the Treasury and the key staff man in the delegation.

The third thing was in the field of foreign aid in general. I had had a good deal of experience with aid, including the Marshall Plan and subsequent developments, and had written quite a lot about it. I had worked extensively with Max Millikan, Walt Rostow, and others in Cambridge on ideas for a larger and more durable aid program and I participated in a number of meetings in Washington of a key group that was advising President Kennedy at that time. There were two meetings with him in the Cabinet room that I was involved in, having to do with the structure of the aid organization and the philosophy of the new aid program.

The one specific contribution I can claim credit for was that the organization of the new aid agency was mainly based on geographical lines. The original idea had been to do it on functional lines. I argued that it should be set up on geographical lines in order to be parallel with the State Department organization, in order to make possible effective collaboration between geographical aid offices and

[-10-]

State Department offices. This was debated in front of President Kennedy one afternoon in the Cabinet room and he accepted the geographical unit as the basic organization. There was also a good deal of discussion—on which I had pronounced views which were not accepted—of including in the aid agency the Food-for-Peace program and the Peace Corps. But, as you know, it was decided that both of these should be made White House dependences. I was at this time also a member of the second Berle Task Force.

RIELLY:           The one that visited Brazil?

GORDON:           No, that was just Berle. The Task Force was a weird administrative device, a totally unsuccessful one. The first Task Force which ran from late November to early January was a real Task Force.

RIELLY:           Yes, I remember now.

GORDON:           Then, after the inauguration, the President asked Berle to become Assistant Secretary for Latin American Affairs. Berle refused; he thought that the job should have the rank of Under Secretary. But for many reasons, including the fact that there was no legislative authority and that difficulties would have been created with the other Assistant Secretaries of State, including Governor

[-11-]

Williams [G. Mennen Williams], the idea was rejected. Instead, Berle was made the chairman of a sort of continuing Task Force, with an office in the State Department, very close to the Secretary's office, and with some direct access to the White House. There were several other members of this Task Force. I think all the other members were full-time people in Washington, and I was the only part-time one. Well, that was a totally impossible arrangement. The relations between the Task Force and the Assistant Secretary (who was Tom Mann [Thomas Clifton Mann] until Tom left to go to Mexico, and then Wymberley Coerr as Acting Assistant Secretary for some months until Bob Woodward [Robert Forbes Woodward] was brought up from Chile) were completely obscure. Friction was built into the arrangement. Tom found it impossible as I recall. He can testify to that himself. I know that Wymberley Coerr, who didn't even have the full status of Assistant Secretary, found it extremely frustrating.

I was asked at that time, three times, once by Secretary Rusk, once by Acting Secretary Chester Bowles [Chester B. Bowles] when the Secretary was traveling out of the country, and once by the President, to take the job of Assistant Secretary and it was made clear to me that if I took it the Task Force would be abolished simultaneously. I think the only

[-12-]

reason the Task Force was kept on for some length of time was that the President was having trouble finding somebody to take the job as Assistant Secretary.

RIELLY: This was of course the period in which there was a great deal of criticism of the administration's handling of Latin American affairs, precisely for this reason, because there were no clear lines of authority and because there was this friction between the White House, the Task Force, and the State Department. Some people contended that this indicated that Kennedy really knew very little about administration. What you have suggested indicates that he was aware of the problems but just could not find the right man to put in as Assistant Secretary of State.

GORDON: Yes, I think he became aware quite early that this arrangement wasn't working. Now mind you, this was the time that the preparations were being made for the Cuban invasion, the Bay of Pigs.

RIELLY: Yes.

GORDON: I am happy to say that I knew nothing about those. There was only one meeting of the Task Force, an early meeting, at which this question was touched on. After that, the meetings of the Task Force dealt with rather tertiary matters, and

[-13-]

they became less and less frequent anyway. I became deeply involved in presenting the Act of Bogota to the Congressional Appropriations Committees, and I told Mr. Berle by April that I had finished what I promised to do. I didn't think the Task Force was of any use as a collective body and I was preparing to go back to Harvard full time, except for work on the preparations for Punta del Este. Other things later interfered with this decision. But my impression is that President Kennedy was aware before the Cuban affair, the Bay of Pigs, that the Task Force was working very badly and had begun a strenuous search for somebody to take on the Assistant Secretaryship.

RIELLY: Now, why is it that he had so much difficulty finding a man to accept this job? Was it purely because of all this difficulty with the Task Force and the White House? Supposedly there were a dozen people asked to take this job, according to the Washington press reports of that time.

GORDON: I don't know how many were asked. I know that Carl Spaeth [Carl B. Spaeth] was asked and virtually accepted, and then went back to California and changed his mind. There were certainly several others who were asked. I think there were two kinds of reasons.

[-14-]

First, the number of people in the United States who have much background in Latin America is small, a lot smaller at that time than it is now and it's still small. It wasn't easy to

develop lists. I did some work on that with Ralph Dungan [Ralph A. Dungan], with Dick Goodwin, and with Secretary Rusk and Under Secretary Ball. I once submitted a list of six names myself, at one of the times I turned the job down—on the theory that the best defense was a good offense. There were three names from outside the government and three names from within. They included Ellsworth Bunker who, as I recall it, was one the President asked. Ellsworth turned it down; I think simply on the grounds that he felt that he was getting along in years. He knew that it was an extremely demanding job and didn't feel that his health would permit him to take it. Some others were concerned about the Berle relationship until it was made absolutely clear that that was going to end, and end simultaneously with an appointment.

Secondly, of course, once the Bay of Pigs failure took place, it was not the most agreeable atmosphere for anyone to get involved in. There were a great many pieces of broken china to be picked up all over the hemisphere as a result of that. This was probably the greatest single error of the Kennedy administration, and my

[-15-]

impression is that President Kennedy felt that way himself. He never made any bones about recognizing this as having been an error.

RIELLY: In your own case, what were your principal reasons for turning down the job?

GORDON: Well, I had two fundamentally: One was that I didn't really feel qualified. I knew a good deal about Brazil because I had been working here for a couple of years; I had learned Portuguese, to read at least (I couldn't speak it much at that time); I didn't know Spanish; I knew absolutely nothing about Central America or the Caribbean, having never been there. I had begun to learn quite a lot about other South American countries too—Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Peru, and so on—but it seemed to me that somebody ought to be found who knew much more about Spanish America than I did. It should preferably be someone who spoke Spanish because most of the Spanish American Ambassadors in Washington, both to the OAS and to the White House, are very poor in English, and it seemed to me very useful to have an Assistant Secretary who had full command of Spanish.

And the other reason was financial. Having four children, a couple in college and at that time a couple in private prep schools,

[-16-]

we had made the calculations and found that on a twenty thousand dollar salary, with the kind of entertaining the Assistant Secretary would have to do, that we would lose several thousand dollars a year which we didn't have. It seemed impossible for us to take on such a job for two or three years without going bankrupt.

RIELLY: Since you accompanied Ambassador Stevenson [Adlai E. Stevenson] on his South American visit in 1961, would you care to tell something about the trip and its effect on U.S.-Brazilian relations, and also more generally Latin America as a whole?

GORDON: Yes. During June, we visited all ten of the South American capitals in eighteen days. The principal members of the party were Stevenson, Ellis Briggs [Ellis O. Briggs], a former Ambassador to Brazil, and myself. Briggs was the political adviser, since he knew South America generally, and I was the economic adviser charged with helping Stevenson in explaining to our contacts the administration's ideas about the Alliance for Progress. This was in the first half of June '61. In Brazil we were received by Quadros [Jânio da Silva Quadros] in São Paulo one Sunday morning. What was scheduled as an hour's interview, turned out to be two hours and a half, a very cordial talk. Quadros

[-17-]

was in one of his most lucid phases, and went out of his way, perhaps partly with the Berle episode in the background, to make it publicly cordial. After we finished talking, we went outside. It was a bright sunny day. There were hundreds of photographers. There were some very nice informal speeches by Quadros and Stevenson about the talk.

By that time Quadros also knew that I was coming later as Ambassador and he went out of his way to be rather nice to me. I imagine that this was because Punta del Este was coming up and he was hoping for great things from the Alliance for Progress. Whether there was also a momentary shift in his general foreign policy line, I don't know.

The purpose of the Stevenson visit was twofold: It was a major effort at reconstructing the broken pieces of continental policy after the Bay of Pigs fracasso. It resulted in part from an initiative of Lleras Camargo [Alberto Lleras Camargo], the then President of Colombia, for some kind of hemispheric political action to deal with the Cuban problem. This was not to be a military attack—that idea had clearly been ruled out, unless there were some aggressive initiative from Cuba. The aim was rather to isolate Cuba, to reduce the possibilities of Cuban

[-18-]

subversion in the other countries and to secure a rededication of Latin America to democratic, anti-communist, ideals. The political part of the mission had to do with this kind of initiative that Lleras Camargo had stimulated. In a sense this was what later became the second Punta del Este meeting in January 1962.

The economic side of the mission was to help us develop our own position on the Alliance for Progress, to help communicate our ideas to the Presidents and Foreign and Finance Ministers of each of the South American countries, to get their ideas and to prepare to make the Punta del Este meeting a success, which it was. One of the side questions which was discussed in all the capitals was whether it would be a good idea to have a meeting of Presidents, and we returned with divided opinions on this subject. I was in favor of it; Briggs

was against it; Governor Stevenson was hesitant, but finally he came down against it. President Kennedy did not come to Punta del Este, as you know.

I have always regretted this. I think that if it had been made a Presidents' meeting instead of merely a Finance or Economic Ministers' meeting, the Alliance might have had the kind of political impetus right from the beginning, which it has not had and which has been

[-19-]

one of the lacking elements, one of the difficulties. Of course, in the Brazilian case, whether, if President Quadros had met with President Kennedy on the 18<sup>th</sup> of August, he would have decided not to resign his job on the 25<sup>th</sup> of August, I don't know. Conceivably he might not, because I believe a Presidential meeting would have created quite a different general atmosphere. But that becomes extremely speculative.

RIELLY:           You mentioned that one of the principal purposes of the Stevenson visit was to prepare the way for the Punta del Este conference in August. You participated in the conference, first of all in preparations for the conference, and actually in the conference itself, did you not? Could you tell us something about your role in it and about your general evaluation of the results?

GORDON:           Yes, I can. Let me pause first on one particular point which has to do directly with President Kennedy and the extent of his interest in Latin America. When we got back from the Stevenson mission, Ambassador Briggs was a little ill. The altitude had bothered him in La Paz, and he went off to New England, but Stevenson and I reported one morning to the President who himself had a rather bad cold and was in bed in the White House. We went

[-20-]

over with Chester Bowles. Secretary Rusk was away at the time. Bowles was Acting Secretary, and the three of us spent a fairly long morning session with him—I think it must have been a couple of hours—in which we were put through a very searching cross-examination. It was the longest meeting I had had with the President up to that particular time and I emerged from it very much impressed with the range of his grasp, the depth of his interest, and the penetrating character of his questions. It was for me an impressive lesson in his remarkable intellectual qualities, including his passionate interest in facts, in personalities that we encountered, and in the social and economic problems in the various countries.

RIELLY:           At that time, that would have been mid-June 1961, was it your impression that Kennedy had more or less recovered from the shock of the Bay of Pigs?

GORDON: Yes. By this time I would say psychologically he had certainly recovered from it; he was regarding it objectively as a problem from which one had to emerge, had to deal with. His late April feeling of frustration and bitterness, this I felt was entirely gone.

[-21-]

RIELLY: Had it been Kennedy himself who had virtually selected Stevenson for this mission?

GORDON: I don't know. I happened to be in Europe at that time. I had had a long standing commitment for the last week of May to go to Paris to participate in a seminar, organized by SHAPE. General Norstad [Lauris Norstad] was the Supreme Commander then. In my earlier days I had had a lot to do with NATO, and knew SHAPE very well. The occasion was a seminar on what advanced countries should do for underdeveloped countries. There was one German, one Englishman, one Frenchman and myself. The seminar was part of the so-called SHAPE exercise, which is a yearly meeting of all the high officers from the NATO countries. General Norstad had asked me to participate in the other meetings that week as well. My wife [Allison Gordon] hadn't been to Paris for six years, so we went together. I got back from Paris at the end of May '61, intending to spend the full month of June cleaning up some stuff for Harvard and then to come to Rio in July to finish up certain pieces of my research project, then in August to join the delegation for Punta del Este, and then, of course, to get ready to come back as Ambassador. I had no sooner gotten into my office in Cambridge when Dick Goodwin telephoned to

[-22-]

ask whether my bags were still packed. This was the request to go on the Stevenson mission, which had been cooked up during the previous week while I was in Europe. I just don't know about its origin.

RIELLY: But regardless of the...

GORDON: Was there speculation at the time about someone else as a possible missionary?

RIELLY: No, but there was as you recall, throughout the Kennedy administration, particularly the first year of the Kennedy administration, speculation about the relations between the President and Ambassador Stevenson, and I was just wondering to what extent President Kennedy had personally participated in the choice of Stevenson, and I would also be interested in knowing your impression about Kennedy's reaction to Stevenson's report.

GORDON: There was no sign in that meeting of tension between them. Whosever idea it was, in my mind there couldn't have been a better missionary. Stevenson had only been in Latin America once before. This was on a private visit with Bill Benton [William B. Benton], really for the Encyclopedia Britannica. But he had made a tremendous impression, and Stevenson was obviously a hero in Latin America, especially in intellectual circles here. The reception that we had, not only from

[-23-]

the Presidents and other top Ministers in all of these countries, but from people generally, from intellectual groups, labor groups where we had time to meet them (we tried to pack in as much as we could in the way of labor meetings, students and all this sort of thing), was really quite remarkable. I suspect that this was one reasons that he got such a cordial reception from Janio Quadros. The Stevenson name was extremely highly regarded in Brazil, and Quadros is a pretty shrewd politician.

RIELLY: Moving along now to the Punta del Este conference. Would you comment on your own role in the preparations for it and the conferences itself and your appraisal of it?

GORDON: Yes. The agenda and the early thinking I have already covered. The agenda was worked out in April 1962, here in Rio, with the three key Latin Americans, Herrera, Sol and Prebisch, Prebisch being then the Executive Secretary of ECLA. Sol then organized a number of task forces under the OAS which produced four background papers for the Punta del Este conference. As far as our own delegation was concerned, John Leddy was designated quite early by Dillon as the coordinator for it, and he began in early May to devote a great deal of his time to preparations. He was

[-24-]

spending more and more time at it as I was spending less and less, because I had this commitment to Europe and was also getting concerned about finishing up some Harvard chores. But we did a good deal of work together. Both John and I drafted various papers for it. But in that particular phase the leadership of the technical preparations, policy preparations, was really clearly with John Leddy.

Now as to the conference itself. I was already in Brazil where I had lectured at the National War College here and was finishing up some academic work. I was picked up here in early August by the delegation. We had a meeting with Quadros because the special airplane of Dillon passed through Brasilia and spent a night there. We had a meeting with Quadros that morning before we took off for Montevideo to get to Punta del Este.

When Dillon and the others arrived, Dillon said that he hoped that I would take charge of the work for the delegation on the organizational aspects of the Alliance. This involved the way in which the OAS Secretariat would operate and the functions of what later

became the Panel of Nine, the so-called nine wise men. We had had a more far-reaching idea at that time on multilateral machinery for review

[-25-]

of programs and general guidance of policies. I was the spokesman for the delegation in that part of the negotiation.

In addition, John Leddy and I, together with Ed Martin, I would say, were the three principal aides to Secretary Dillon in the general work of the delegation. Dillon himself, of course, is in no sense a passive member of any such group; he played an extremely active part. But in general it was the three of us, Leddy, Martin and myself, who accompanied Dillon in the key bilateral discussions with other delegations. The three of us were the U.S. representatives in the drafting meetings which took place in the Brazilian delegation headquarters, which actually produced the text of the Charter. The draft was submitted to plenary discussion, and modified a good deal in the course of that discussion; but the drafting group consisted of Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, Mexico and ourselves, and of these, the Brazilians and ourselves were much the most active. Roberto Campos [Roberto de Oliveira Campos] was the vice chief of the Brazilian delegation. The head was Mariani [Clemente Mariani], the then Finance Minister. Campos took a very active part in the drafting.

RIELLY: One of the principal issues between the United States and Brazil at that meeting was over this question of the

[-26-]

multilateral, the proposed multilateral character of the Alliance. Is it true that Brazil and Argentina in effect killed any effective multilateral mechanism at that time?

GORDON: I don't think there was so much of an issue between the U.S. and Brazil. The Argentines were radically hostile to any form of multilateral machinery and it was only with the most strenuous effort that we were able to get them to accept this idea of the Panel of Nine, the nine wise men. The Brazilian position didn't seem to me nearly as vigorous as the Argentine. I think they were concerned about a kind of technocracy, setting perhaps artificial standards for exactly what form national plans should take, and exactly what the relationships should be between reforms and aid. I must confess that I shared that concern myself. I thought that some of the thinking in Washington prior to the meeting had gone too far. I felt that Prebisch, who looked upon himself as the principal technocrat, so to speak, probably was going too far in this respect.

The position of our own delegation was reasonably flexible. I would say that we wanted more of this kind of machinery than the Brazilians did, less clearly than the ECLA group did. The ECLA group had with it a number of delegations. As I recall it, the

[-27-]

Venezuelans and some of the smaller Central American ones were very keen about this sort of machinery, but the Brazilian position was not nearly as far away from ours as the Argentine. In the Argentine case we had some vigorous discussions in the sessions, the open committee sessions. I don't mean that they were public, but they were in big, full committee sessions of the conference.

The Argentines took the line that they were against all forms of planning. They were strong believers in private enterprise. They thought the important thing was monetary stabilization and lots of capital, lots of support for the balance-of-payments, public and private both. They were taking a rather doctrinaire liberal position, in the European sense of the term. They didn't like ECLA anyway; they particularly didn't like Prebisch; and they thought that multilateral machinery to review plans and to determine who would get aid on the basis of plans would put them in a kind of planning strait jacket which was contrary to the philosophy of the then government.

RIELLY: To what extent did the Cuban issue represent an important issue at the conference itself?

GORDON: Well, Che Guevara was there of course heading the Cuban delegation. He occupied a great deal of time in the meetings

[-28-]

and obviously was a very active factor behind the scenes. So there is no question but that it was a key issue. There was a kind of stage set for a certain amount of debating between Che Guevara and Douglas Dillon. I thought that Dillon handled himself with extraordinary tact and skill in this. He avoided political polemics with Guevara until the last morning when he replied firmly in four or five paragraphs to some purely political charges which Guevara had made about our motives and the nature of the program, such as its really being just an instrument of Yankee imperialism. Dillon was vigorously applauded by everybody there, except the Cubans, and I think one Bolivian who was rather pro-Cuban.

The Cuban line was to try to pooh-pooh the program as being grossly inadequate, and as having too many strings attached to it. They had done the same thing at Bogota. They were more skillful at Punta del Este because Che Guevara was a much better representative than the man who had been at Bogota, whose name I forget. They made very little headway. I don't think they really made many friends or influenced many people at Punta del Este.

RIELLY: You mentioned earlier that you had favored the idea of a meeting of Presidents. To what extent did President

[-29-]

Kennedy ever seriously consider attending the Punta del Este conference?

GORDON: At the time we came back from the Stevenson visit, he did give it some thought. The written report which we submitted to him raised this question at the end, and gave some pros and cons. And he did give it some thought for a few days. I think probably that the Cuban problem was decisive, for after all Cuba was still a member of the Organization. The idea of a personal confrontation with the President of Cuba wasn't particularly appealing to President Kennedy for obvious reasons. My guess is that, given his quite intensive interest in Latin American development, if the Cubans had already been out of the OAS, he would have been inclined to go. But the possible unpleasantness of this kind of confrontation and the danger that it would become a kind of dog fight, including recriminations about the Bay of Pigs which would distract public attention from the positive side of the Alliance for Progress, were important considerations against it. I don't believe that he ever thought about it again after that decision which he made in June not to do it, shortly after we got back from the Stevenson trip.

[-30-]

RIELLY: You were, you had already been asked by the President to serve as Ambassador to Brazil before the Punta del Este conference opened?

GORDON: Oh yes, this idea came up in May.

RIELLY: Oh, it came up in May. Before we get into the question of how Kennedy happened to choose you as Ambassador, and when he asked you and so forth, were you in a position at the time of the Punta del Este conference to assess the reaction to the conference in Brazil where you were to come as Ambassador just about six or eight weeks later? Or was there any reaction?

GORDON: The reaction to the conference...

RIELLY: Within Brazil itself?

GORDON: You recall there was only a week between the end of the conference and the resignation of Quadros, so that the resignation of Quadros of course...

RIELLY: Overshadowed everything.

GORDON: Of course, since there were two weeks when the country seemed on the brink of a civil war.

RIELLY: Let's get on then to the question of the actual appointment. You say President Kennedy first raised the subject with you in May?

[-31-]

GORDON: Yes, not directly. It was first mentioned to me by Dick Goodwin on the eve of our departure in April for the Inter-American Bank Governors' meeting here in Rio, just as a thought. "Would I possibly be interested," or "had I ever thought about the possibility,"—some rather casual remark of that kind. And the answer was, "No, I had never thought about it at all." That was sort of a seed planted. When we were down here for the week, I thought about it a little bit at intervals. Whether Dick had talked with the President at that time, or the Secretary of State, or anybody else, I don't know. He did apparently mention it to Dillon, because on the way back Dillon said something to me about it and urged that I should consider it seriously, if it were offered. This was the status it was in. Then I heard nothing more about it for a while. I talked with my wife, and after considerable reflection decided that probably we would be interested if it were offered, but without being able to take it until October owing to the large number of unfulfilled commitments at Harvard which had all been pushed further back because of these activities we have been discussing.

Then in May I got a call from Bowles. I was up in Cambridge at the time Bowles called, as Acting Secretary, to make me a formal

[-32-]

invitation. I agreed on two conditions. One was that I would come only in October; the second was that somehow or other the financial arrangements would be such that I wouldn't be bankrupted by the job, as ambassadors used to be in Paris and London, and I believe here too, if they didn't have independent means. The financial problem turned out to be easily handled. The government had already resolved that with Jim Gavin [James M. Gavin] in Paris and they applied the same arrangements here which they had with Gavin. Basically that was that the full costs of maintaining the residence, except for two servants, would be handled by the government. There was also a slight increase in the representational allowance.

Actually the representation costs here have never been anything like as high as they have in Paris or London. Fortunately, the American Society is host for the July 4<sup>th</sup> party, rather than the Ambassador, and it has been a perfectly manageable thing. But I believe that prior to the Kennedy administration the Ambassador had usually paid for house maintenance costs on a rather large scale, and this was changed. It was changed first in Paris, and I believe changed in all of the embassies, obviously a desirable change. The other condition about delaying until October bothered President

[-33-]

Kennedy a good deal. He told me later he was sorry about this and asked if I could not possibly go sooner. I explained that I had a couple of months' work to do for Harvard at a minimum, and I was already committed to going to Punta del Este, so that this was really only adding another six weeks or two months to what would have been required anyway.

RIELLY: Why do you think Kennedy chose you as Ambassador? Did he ever indicate to you why he chose you, or why he did not choose a career man? Did he ever discuss with you the general subject of career ambassadors and non-career ambassadors?

GORDON: The general subject, yes; the specific subject, no. I presume that the suggestion of my appointment came from Goodwin, and I don't know whom the President checked it with. Obviously inquiries were made of Senators Fulbright [J. William Fulbright] and Morse [Wayne L. Morse], both of whom I had known for some while anyway, and who were both very friendly. But what exactly went through President Kennedy's mind, I don't know.

I suppose the reasons were pretty clear in my case. This is the biggest country in the hemisphere, and the Alliance for Progress was the principal expression of the Kennedy administration's Latin

[-34-]

American policy. I knew a good deal about Brazil, having worked here on a research project for a couple of years. I was already widely acquainted among Brazilians; I had a reading knowledge of Portuguese and at least a foundation for a speaking knowledge; and I was much involved in the Alliance for Progress. Here was an opportunity to help its application in the largest country in Latin America. I think these were the main elements.

RIELLY: You mentioned that you did discuss with President Kennedy the general question of ambassadors, career ambassadors.

GORDON: Yes. On a number of occasions, when he was asking for suggestions from me for nominations for vacant embassies, he said rather mournfully that he was surprised and disappointed that the career did not seem to contain a larger number of people who met his standards. He had a feeling that many of the career people were passive rather than active. He was a very active man. He liked to have active people around him, and serving as his representatives. He had a very far-reaching concept of the responsibility of ambassadors, at least in the non-European areas.

He would occasionally say that there was a difference because Europe was closer. The Secretary of State had very close personal

[-35-]

Interests in European problems, and NATO and the cold war were centered there. Under Secretary George Ball was also deeply interested in Europe, so that in a sense European policies were handled more directly from Washington, with a lot of initiative from Washington. But in Asia, Africa and Latin America, President Kennedy felt—he said this once semi-publicly in a big meeting of the State Department staff and he said it privately on a number of occasions in my hearing—that he meant exactly what was in his famous letter of May 1961. This letter to all ambassadors tells us that we are responsible for directing and

controlling all American official activities in the country. Kennedy said that he really did look to us for ideas about what could be done to improve the quality of relations with the United States, the process of social and economic development, the strategy in a broad sense of combined political, economic, information, psychological, and where relevant, military strategy.

So he had set himself, I think, a quite high standard for the kinds of people, with the kinds of breadth of interest and understanding and if possible knowledge of the country, that ambassadors should be. He said that he wished that he could draw more from the career service to find them, but he felt that there were many

[-36-]

cases where he had to go outside the career. But I think he was on the whole a little reluctant about that.

RIELLY: You actually arrived in Brazil on October 19.

GORDON: October 13.

RIELLY: October 13, 1961, which was the period just after the resignation of Quadros, after the accession of President Goulart [João Goulart] to the Presidency, but before the constitutional crisis had been wholly resolved for instance.

GORDON: No, that isn't quite right. The resignation was on August 25<sup>th</sup>, and there were then the two weeks of uncertainty. During the second of those two weeks, the Congress here passed a constitutional amendment to institute the parliamentary system. It was the so-called Additional Act of the Constitution. Goulart had been sworn in as President, after saying he accepted the Additional Act, on September 7<sup>th</sup> which is Brazil's independence day. He had named, before he was sworn in, a Prime Minister who in turn had named the Cabinet. Tancredo Neves was the Prime Minister. So by the time I got here this system supposedly had been functioning for about five weeks.

RIELLY: Before we get into the period of your ambassadorship

[-37-]

here there is one episode which you might want to comment on; this pertains to the development of the Northeast program, the special program for the Northeast, and the conversations of Brazilian and American officials with President Kennedy about that program. Special importance has been attached to the conversation which Celso Furtado had with President Kennedy, I believe in the summer of 1961. Would you care to say something about the general subject?

GORDON: Yes. You will recall that the Northeast of Brazil had been put on the map for Americans by two front page articles by Tad Szulc of the New York Times the previous year. They talked about this area with its tradition of droughts, great poverty compared with the rest of the country, the development of peasant leagues, Recife as the so-called communist capital of Brazil, etc. The broad impression was an area with twenty odd million people in it with explosive political and economic and social conditions, and with an effort under SUDENE, which had just been created—the Northeast Federal Regional Development Organization, of which Celso Furtado was the head—as a possible planning body to do something to overcome all of these ills. That had been followed up by some other widely spread publicity in the United

[-38-]

States. A number of television companies sent people down to make documentaries about the Northeast, including both ABC and CBS, as I remember. And there were several articles published in weekly magazines.

So that there was a kind of awareness of the Northeast which before 1959 did not exist at all. I must confess that before I began reading about Brazil in the mid-50's, the existence of a special Northeast Brazil problem hadn't crossed my own consciousness, and I am sure that most of the American public had never heard of the Brazilian Northeast until these New York Times articles appeared in 1960. But this had sensitized the people.

Of course the government had been aware that there was a problem; they knew about the periodic droughts and the relative poverty. There had been an especially bad drought in 1958, one of the worst in history, and I believe we provided some special food and crisis relief materials in connection with that. But the conditions were ripe for the idea of developing a special Northeast Brazil program as a kind of anticipatory phase of the Alliance for Progress.

The idea was that it would later be gathered up into the framework of the Alliance as a whole. Here was, in terms of population

[-39-]

and area, the biggest region of really desperate poverty, so it seemed at least, in the whole hemisphere—twenty odd million people with an average per capita income of \$100 or less and the area itself much bigger than most of the individual Latin American countries. It may have been over-dramatized, but this was the view at the time.

For these reasons Celso Furtado was invited to Washington for discussions with our authorities about a possible special program including an early impact phase, which would then be continued and perhaps expanded under the Alliance for Progress. I think he came in June, 1961. I participated in a couple of meetings with him in the State Department. This stay of his, which lasted about a week, ended with a rather long talk with President Kennedy, which I did not participate in, but which Furtado told me afterwards very much impressed him. Out of that there emerged a White House statement indicating that we would develop a special program, and that a mission would be sent here for the purpose. That later became the mission under Merwin Bohan. They came after I got here; I believe it was early November

when they arrived. They spent several weeks in Recife and wrote their report in January, 1962. This

[-40-]

outlined the special assistance program for the Northeast. It was later refined in Washington discussions I joined in and in negotiations with the Brazilians, and the agreement was signed by San Tiago Dantas and Dean Rusk on April 13, 1962.

RIELLY: Turning now to after you became Ambassador here in Brazil. It was only a little over a month after you arrived that there occurred the Soviet-United States confrontation over Cuba.

GORDON: No, that was a year later.

RIELLY: Oh yes, oh yes. You are quite right. That is right—1962. When you arrived in Brazil in October of 1961, did you sense upon arrival any enthusiasm for the Kennedy policy in Latin America, any enthusiasm for the Alliance for Progress, or was it for the most part unknown?

GORDON: Well, yes. The country, or course, was still very much under the shock effect of the Quadros resignation. The Kennedy image in Brazil was clearly already an extremely positive one, no doubt about that. People here to some extent thought that I was one of the intimate Harvard advisers of Kennedy. While I never deliberately deceived them, I didn't always go out of my way to correct this particular impression because it was useful and I

[-41-]

think it accounted in part for the very cordial welcome that I had too. Of course, it was true that I was then a close adviser of President Kennedy on Latin American policy. I had been for a good many months.

The attitude toward the Alliance for Progress was at that time certainly a positive one. In my first conversations with Goulart, he indicated he had scarcely heard of it. Of course, he had been out in communist China at the time of Punta del Este, you recall.

RIELLY: Yes.

GORDON: You recall that he had just left there when Quadros resigned. He himself never displayed a great deal of interest but his Ministers did, especially San Tiago Dantas, Walter Moreira Salles and Tancredo Neves. Neves was the Prime Minister; Moreira Salles, the Finance Minister; and San Tiago Dantas, the Foreign Minister, at this time. They displayed a great deal of interest. Tancredo Neves read the Charter of Punta del Este in late October after I gave him a copy in Portuguese and used

it as a basis for a couple of very enthusiastic speeches during the few weeks which followed. This subject was of course my own principal interest in taking the job.

[-42-]

Very shortly after I arrived and presented credentials, I met with these three key Ministers. At that time I didn't know, and perhaps no one knew, what the balance of influence here was between the President and the Cabinet. If one took the Additional Act seriously, the President was just a figurehead and the Cabinet was what counted. I fairly rapidly became aware that that wasn't the actual situation, but it looked to me as if the right thing to do was to approach these key Ministers. I had one long meeting with the three of them together, then followed up by many meetings with Dantas and with Moreira Salles, with a view to getting some machinery created here which would do the planning and the coordinating work which the Charter of Punta del Este called for.

Quadros had issued a decree before he resigned establishing a coordinating and planning organization attached to the Presidency but he had not appointed anybody to it. Obviously, with the parliamentary system, one didn't want something attached to the Presidency. We worked out some ideas with the three Ministers of an organization which would be mainly drawn from the Foreign and Finance Ministries, but would also have the National Development Bank, the Bank of Brazil, the Ministry of Transport and Public Works, and

[-43-]

various other appropriate agencies geared into it. This encountered bureaucratic obstacles very rapidly, mainly from the National Development Bank. So that tension developed between Dantas and Moreira Salles on the one hand and the National Development Bank staff on the other hand and the machinery did not get created.

RIELLY: I think it was just a little over a month after you came to Brazil that President Kennedy appointed as the United States Coordinator of the Alliance for Progress, Mr. Teodoro Moscoso.

GORDON: That's right.

RIELLY: What was the reaction in Brazil, if any, to this appointment? Was the fact that Moscoso is Puerto Rican singled out for special attention?

GORDON: There wasn't a great reaction in Brazil. There were a few people who didn't like it. But in general Moscoso's name was not well-known here at all and I don't think it had much reaction.

Actually, when Moscoso paid his first visit which was the following spring I believe, he was very well received. I am trying to remember the timing of it. I know he was here in August of 1962 but it seems to me that was the second visit. I think he had been here once during the earlier months. He made a very good impression,

[-44-]

had various press conferences, television interviews, many appearances with governors, and so on. He spent some days in the Northeast, was here in Guanabara, visited the Vila Aliança, the first housing project in Brazil under the Alliance, and got very good publicity.

RIELLY: One of the first important official tasks which you had as Ambassador was the preparation for the visit of President Goulart to Washington which took place in April of 1962. Could you tell us something about the origin of the plans for this meeting between President Kennedy and President Goulart, and then later we will launch into a discussion of the substance of the meetings in Washington?

GORDON: Yes. There had been an invitation made to President Quadros before he resigned. I don't recall just when it was made, but I know that when I began to brief myself in Washington for coming down here as Ambassador this was one of the facts which I became acquainted with, and therefore one of the points I discussed with President Kennedy in September just before leaving. I was a little late in getting here, incidentally, because we had a regional meeting of all the South American Ambassadors in Lima at the

[-45-]

beginning of October. It was felt that it would be unwise for me to come here only for a couple of days and then go off to Lima, so I delayed my departure and came directly from Lima after that conference. That's why we arrived only on October 13.

In late September I had a farewell meeting with President Kennedy before coming. One of the questions we explicitly discussed was whether this invitation should be renewed to Goulart. It seemed on the whole that it would be a good thing to do. So that very day that I presented my credentials, I was authorized and did say that President Kennedy hoped that sometime in the next few months President Goulart would find it possible to come to Washington. The idea of the visit was repeatedly mentioned in subsequent conversations and the dates were gradually established, mutually convenient for both sides. So the idea was in a sense carried over from the invitations to Quadros and was already an accepted idea at the time that I got here. We never had any reason really to think about not going through with that.

RIELLY: In regard to the actual visit itself which took place on April 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, President Kennedy and President Goulart met on several occasions, first at a luncheon at the White House on

[-46-]

April 3<sup>rd</sup>, which was followed by discussions, as I understand, between yourself, President Kennedy and Goulart, San Tiago Dantas and others. Would you care to comment on the

subject of that discussion? In general, I understand that the overall discussions during the visit covered such subjects as the position of American companies in Brazil, such as IT&T, American and Foreign Power, general question of expropriations, the general question of the role of foreign private companies in Brazil, and then a number of other substantive problems such as the Northeast problem, the wheat agreement, sugar allocations in the United States market for Brazil, the international coffee agreement, United States support for Brazil in relations with the European common market, and the relationship between Brazil and the Export-Import Bank and the World Bank. Would you care to comment on whichever of those you think were the most significant? Give your overall appraisal of the talks?

GORDON: Yes. The visit was not really a negotiating visit. It was essentially a goodwill visit. I should say, incidentally, that the first point at which the two Presidents met was out of Andrews Air Base, because President Kennedy was there to receive President Goulart when he arrived. This was in the morning, and then there was the usual business of the helicopter flight to the White

[-47-]

House, and the open car drive around town. Then Goulart was deposited at Blair House. He came back to the White House for lunch, and the business sessions were in the afternoon.

You mentioned first this problem of expropriations of American companies in a way which I think may give that proportionately more weight than it actually had in the discussions. It was one of the elements in the discussions, and an important one, but it didn't stand out. It was one on the list. We had worked out with the Brazilians a sort of agenda. In fact, many of the points that you have listed there which were on the agenda were handled very hurriedly on the second day, in the second business session. They got compressed in time and we went through them with great speed. Goulart asked Campos to handle several of them in English in order to save the time of interpretation. Even simultaneous interpretation takes some time. I don't think there was any one dominant theme. President Kennedy was concerned about communist infiltration in the trade union movement here, a concern which he got partly from government reports but also very strongly from the AFL-CIO. They, of course, have been actively interested in Latin American labor movements, and they had reported some pretty

[-48-]

unpleasant developments, including a critical election in December 1961 in the National Industrial Workers Confederation here where the leadership had fallen into partly communist and partly fellow traveling hands.

Cuba, surprisingly enough, was not discussed very much at the meeting. This was, of course, about two months after the Punta del Este political conference in January, 1962, where San Tiago Dantas, who was with Goulart in April, had played a leading role. There was some discussion about Cuba between Dantas and Dean Rusk, but in the Goulart-Kennedy conversations there was really very little mention of Cuba. The Cuban situation seemed to be more or less on ice at that time.

RIELLY: One of the subjects which Goulart and Kennedy also discussed according to reports was the question of the recent military coup d'état in Argentina which had opposed the Frondizi [Arturo Frondizi] government. Would you care to indicate something about the respective views of Kennedy and Goulart on that and how each responded to each other's views? And also this might be an opportunity to give a reaction, your assessment of Brazilian reaction to Kennedy's general policy on military governments, and coup d'états, and

[-49-]

secondly your own evaluation of how effective that policy was.

GORDON: First, so far as the discussion between the two Presidents of the Argentine thing goes, I remember it only rather vaguely. My recollection of it is that it wasn't a very serious discussion. I rather had the impression that they were discussing it because they thought they should open the conversation together on matters of general international interest, following the usual style of Presidential meetings. But there was nothing to be decided in the way of policy on the subject, by either of the governments. There was some mention certainly.

Now on the broader question that you asked, concerning Brazilian attitudes toward our policies on military governments. There was great interest in them. The Peruvian case was the one which created the most excitement and attention here, when President Prado [Manuel Prado Ugarteche] was removed and the elections there were annulled. The press had a great deal of discussion of our policy, on the whole rather favorable but also concerned about being excessively doctrinaire. Of course, the press attitudes here depend on the particular newspaper that you are discussing, and it's rare that there is a full press consensus on anything. But there was certainly a good

[-50-]

deal of attention paid to this policy. I think there was a feeling at the start that it was good that we had condemned this rather brusque coup. People appreciated this. But there was concern about what seemed to be the very forceful action in cutting off aid programs and generally acting as if we would never recognize the Peruvian government.

There is a tendency toward realism here with respect to recognition. There is no doctrine; there is nothing like the Betancourt Doctrine or the Estrada Doctrine. There is a very pragmatic approach. To the extent that there is any doctrine, it comes closer to the British one that you recognize de facto governments, if they are reasonable conscientious about their international obligations, unless there is some special reason of national interest not to do so. This is about the practice. So that in other cases, for example Honduras and the Dominican Republic, the Brazilians suspended relations, waited for a while, and after a while resumed them. They didn't make much noise one way or the other. But they were not only subscribers to, they were the draftsmen of the Declaration of Santiago, Chile, a few years

back, which was drafted mainly by San Tiago Dantas. And their official stance in the Foreign Office and

[-51-]

the professional diplomatic circles here was naturally to support representative government and constitutional continuity, and to take a dim view of coups.

Their relations with Prado had been good. Their relations with Frondizi had been unusually good because there had been some development of an Argentine-Brazilian axis.

RIELLY:           What is your own personal impression of the effectiveness of President Kennedy's policy on unconstitutional governments?

GORDON:           I think it had some effect. The principal effects I think were to the good, although obviously I wasn't directly involved. In the Peruvian case, and the Argentine case, and the Ecuadorian case, and the Dominican (I don't know about the Honduran), it didn't ward off action but it did in all of these cases help bring about a reconstitutionalization on a reasonably orderly timetable, probably a good deal sooner and more effectively than would have been the case without this policy thrust. I think the decision, for example, of the Junta in Peru to have an election a year later (we tried to get it somewhat sooner, but still a year was not too bad) and the fact that this was carried through was a good sign. There was a similar thing in

[-52-]

Argentina, and similar pledges in the other two countries I have mentioned. I myself think the way the Peruvian thing was handled was a mistake and I believe this is the general view in Washington too. We put ourselves out on a limb from which we crawled back a few weeks later, and this was embarrassing. We, ourselves, acted perhaps a little bit hastily.

RIELLY:           At the time of the visit to Washington, there was a private dinner held at the Brazilian Embassy attended by Goulart, yourself, Professor Galbraith, some others, and it is reported that a lively discussion took place. Could you give us some assessment of the discussion and its importance?

GORDON:           Yes. There were two or three discussions. The idea of the dinner, which took place after a big reception at the Brazilian Embassy, was to have some chance for an exposure of the Goulart party to what was considered to be the Kennedy Brain Trust, or parts thereof. Ken Galbraith happened to be back from India at that particular time. He was invited by Arthur Schlesinger. Arthur was there, Richard Goodwin, Ralph Dungan, John McCone [John A. McCone] from the CIA was present, and Ed Martin. And on the Brazilian side, Goulart, San Tiago Dantas, Campos and a couple of other people from the Embassy.

[-53-]

In a sense the party was more for Dantas' benefit than it was for Goulart's, Dantas being an intellectual. And in the generalized conversation around the dinner table, Goulart hardly said a word. He had an interpreter. The conversation was in English and there was an interpreter giving Goulart a running translation of what was going on but he had very little to say.

There was a lot of discussion about the Alliance for Progress, machinery for it, and some discussion of general international problems at the time, whether the Soviet Union was evolving in a more pacific direction, becoming less doctrinaire. This kind of thing. I believe Walt Rostow was at this meeting also. I don't think McGeorge Bundy was there, although he might have been. This was when Rostow was still working on Bundy's staff in the White House. As I recall, it was before the big reorganization. Was it not?

RIELLY: No, the reorganization was in November of '61, I think.

GORDON: Oh well, then it had already taken place.

RIELLY: In conclusion on the Goulart visit, is it your impression that President Kennedy considered it a success? And did you consider it a success?

[-54-]

GORDON: President Kennedy on the whole thought it was. Goulart is rather sensitive to personal relations, and in the personal treatment which he received from President Kennedy, which was a very dignified treatment of equal to equal, I think he really felt quite touched. He was also impressed by the trip. The trip, of course, included New York for a couple of days, the SAC Base headquarters at Omaha, Nebraska and Chicago for a couple of days. Goulart had been in the United States once before about ten years previously but it was a much shorter trip and he hadn't had nearly as extensive contacts. I think he got a good general impression of the United States.

Now, as to whether I think the Goulart visit was a success. In the short run, yes. I think it resulted in some commitments on Goulart's part, which he didn't actually carry through to completion but which embarrassed him later, and which made it much harder for him to take antagonistic actions against the United States than if he had never made this visit and had not engaged in personal conversation with Kennedy. These included the commitments for a peaceful negotiation of the purchase of the foreign-owned public utilities, which is probably the most specific single thing which

[-55-]

came out of the meetings. It included some indications, at least, of reasonable treatment of foreign enterprises, including especially American-owned ones. There was also some discussion with Goulart, although more with Dantas, of the machinery for the Alliance for Progress, and this gave Goulart the impression that there might be something there that he hadn't yet taken sufficiently into account.

Of course, the results were not what we hoped. We hoped that they would consolidate the basis of effective collaboration, that we would get the Alliance for Progress working really well in Brazil, that there would be a reversal of this tendency toward communist infiltration in the trade unions, and so on. In those respects the trip was not a success at all. Starting on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1962, Goulart took a very sharp tack to the left, and there began a whole series of critical developments which ended up, in that phase, with the plebiscite of January 1963 and the restoration of a Presidential government. I think somewhere on your list of dates there is a consultation of mine with President Kennedy in July of that year.

RIELLY: July 30, 1962.

GORDON: Right, let's break off here.

[The interview was suspended at this point for Mr. Rielly to

[-56-]

interview Ambassador Campos.]

RIELLY: Referring to President Kennedy's calendar, you met with him on July 30<sup>th</sup>, 1962, which was roughly four months after the visit of President Goulart. Can you tell us something about the subject of the discussion and the significance of that meeting?

GORDON: Yes. That consultation was to review policies in the light of some very disturbing developments which had taken place here during those four months. They included the resignation of the Tancredo Neves Cabinet, followed by some very sharp political crises here.

President Kennedy and I also talked about various kinds of economic policies. We talked about things that I might do to try to reverse the undesirable trends, or at least slow them down. It was in this general consultation in July that we recognized that, contrary to the hopes and expectations generated during the Goulart visit, Brazilian domestic developments and Brazilian-American relations were going badly and not well.

RIELLY: Several months later, actually three months later, in October of 1962, the Soviet confrontation with the United States

[-57-]

over Cuba took place. Could you tell us something about the reaction in Brazil to this event, your assessment of it, and the impression of President Kennedy's handling of the Cuban affair that was dominant among the Brazilian leaders and government at the time?

GORDON: Yes. This of course was the most critical single event in this whole period. The popular and press reaction to Kennedy's handling of that crisis was one of the most tremendous admiration, respect, endorsement, and support. It was the combination of both firmness and restraint which had this effect.

RIELLY: This was shared by Goulart, too, you had the feeling?

GORDON: Yes. I would say that in the weeks that immediately followed, before Goulart got back to his main preoccupations with domestic affairs, Kennedy's prestige in this country, including the government itself, was the highest of any time until his death. Then, of course, it became a different kind of thing.

The outcome of the crisis had a number of other effects here, of course. Insofar as the myth of Russian military superiority still had adherents, it was pretty well completely exploded. And there was a tremendous disillusionment about Cuba. The Khrushchev [Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev]

[-58-]

offer to withdraw the missiles if we took ours out of Turkey; this kind of disdainful treating of Cuba as a pawn on a chessboard; the fact that Khrushchev would take the missiles out without consulting with Fidel [Fidel Castro]—all this kind of thing was very bad for Cuba's standing in Brazilian circles, including those that had been rather sympathetic to Cuba and Fidel Castro.

So that all in all this was a tremendously important event in Brazil, and the handling of it was endorsed and respected. Undoubtedly this was the most significant international event as far as Brazilian public opinion was concerned during the whole of the Kennedy administration. I would say much more so even than the Bay of Pigs. I wasn't here at the time of the Bay of Pigs. I don't know what the reaction was here, but this one was received with passionate admiration.

RIELLY: Then the next major event in Brazil was the restoration of the Presidential system which fell in January of the following year.

GORDON: That's right.

RIELLY: It was soon after that, was it not, that preparations were made for the negotiations which were completed in March

[-59-]

which came to be known as the Bell [David E. Bell]-Dantas agreement?

GORDON: Yes. They began actually even before, in December of 1962. Dantas had been more or less indicated by Goulart as the probably Finance Minister and he and I had begun talking about the general lines of negotiation

which might be undertaken on the basis of the three-year plan after the plebiscite was over.

RIELLY: Then, despite how badly things appeared to be going in the late autumn of '62, did we have sufficient, did you and the United States government have sufficient confidence that there would be a change after the Presidential system was restored, so that you were willing to enter into these negotiations which might lead to large-scale assistance?

GORDON: Well, we had enough hope that this might be the case, so we were willing to start talking about them, and if a sufficiently effective program seemed to be developed after the plebiscite, then we would negotiate. We didn't actually do any negotiating until March, as you know, when Dantas came to Washington. We considered that this was part of the strategy; this would hold out a carrot and help influence things in the desired direction.

[-60-]

RIELLY: What was there, what happened between December and March?

GORDON: Well, the first thing that happened was the plebiscite which was a tremendous victory for Presidentialism. The vote was about six to one. Then came the designation of the first Presidential Cabinet which had San Tiago Dantas as Finance Minister and apparently as its strong man. I would say he was the outstanding member of the Cabinet. There was also the publication just before the plebiscite of the summary of the three-year plan which had been developed by Furtado. On its face, this was intended to reduce the rate of inflation progressively over three years, while maintaining a six per cent annual growth rate, and to introduce certain structural reforms into the economic and social system.

The three-year plan technically had many defects but the broad purposes of it were, we thought, good. I still think they were good. Dantas appeared to tackle with real energy the problem of containing inflation, through removal of certain import subsidies, a so-called economy program on the budget, credit limitations, the beginnings of a wage policy, a rather sensible coffee policy—all the essential elements of a combined stabilization and development program. And he

[-61-]

sought to enter also into negotiations with the International Monetary Fund to get some assistance from them. So this was the basis that we were working on when the March negotiations began.

I went up a little before Dantas to help develop our position in these negotiations. Basically, that position was that the three-year plan, Dantas as Finance Minister and the kinds of policies he was supporting, were the best bet in sight, that if the program were carried through it had real chances of getting Brazil out of its economic difficulties of the year before, and that it was a good basis for collaboration.

We repeatedly impressed on Dantas in these negotiations the importance of Brazilian commitments being Goulart commitments as well as Dantas commitments. For this reason, when Dantas came to Washington he carried with him two letters signed by Goulart to President Kennedy. Both had been drafted by Dantas, of course. One had to do with the specific problem of the American and Foreign Power Company properties. It said that there had been some delays because of difficulties in public opinion here, but the new Brazilian Congress was going to meet in a couple of days, and shortly thereafter Goulart would be able to proceed with that

[-62-]

settlement. The other was a very long letter, about seven or eight pages, giving his philosophy of the three-year plan, the kind of program they intended to undertake, and set forth the idea of requesting outside financial help related to parallel performance on their part, the two working side by side. This was the Dantas line at that time. Of course it satisfied us very well, since we had by then a basic lack of confidence anyway in Goulart, and the notion of a package of assistance running in parallel with performance seemed a highly desirable idea.

RIELLY: Did Dantas regard the mission as a success? Did you at the time?

GORDON: He was quite disappointed. He wanted a good deal more and he really made no bones about this disappointment when he got back. I think this was a mistake. I think what he got was a great deal. This is a point on which Campos and I have different opinions. We have discussed it often since and we still differ about it. And he will even argue that if we had given Dantas a great deal more that maybe the whole history might have been different and that he would have stayed in and the three-year plan might have been successfully carried through.

[-63-]

I don't believe this, because I think that by that time Goulart was getting more and more interested in long-term continuation in power by one means or another, a Peronista or other type of dictatorship for himself. In a sense this was all shadow boxing, as far as Goulart was concerned. In any case, I think the package that was negotiated was a rather good package both for Brazil and for us. It was related to performance and it was also related, within a formula which left us some flexibility, to expected negotiations by Brazil with the International Monetary Fund and with the Europeans. They never got to that because three months later Goulart threw the whole Cabinet out.

RIELLY: And fired Dantas. In the interim period, Goulart had had a brief meeting with President Kennedy in Rome.

GORDON: That was after the Cabinet was fired, not before, that was on July 1<sup>st</sup>. The Cabinet was fired in June.

RIELLY: Oh, the Cabinet was fired in June.

GORDON: Yes.

RIELLY: What is your impression of the significance of the Goulart-Kennedy meeting in Rome?

GORDON: Well, it was a curious thing, because it was

[-64-]

not planned in advance. It was related to the installation of the new Pope. That was what Goulart was there for.

The contents of the meeting were partly simply pleasantries, but there were three requests made by Goulart. One was a ninety-day postponement of the settlement on the American and Foreign Power case, a subject on which Goulart obviously had a bad guilty conscience. It was the explosion of criticism against that settlement, led by Brizola [Lionel Brizola], which was the proximate, although I think not the real, cause of the removal of the Cabinet. Now that was one.

The second had to do with some help in persuading the Germans to do some long-term financing in Brazil based on anticipated iron ore exports to Germany. And the third had to do with a request of Carvalho Pinto, the new Finance Minister, on postponing a payment on a Treasury loan that was due in July and a later Export-Import Bank payment. Kennedy replied that he hadn't come briefed but that he would look into all three of these matters and write Goulart a letter.

RIELLY: Which he did shortly after.

GORDON: Which he did on July 11<sup>th</sup>, I believe. At least I delivered it on the 19<sup>th</sup> as I recall it.

[-65-]

RIELLY: In view of the general trend of developments in Brazil at that time, it was not surprising that by November, for example when the Inter-American Economic and Social Committee met in, Council met in São Paulo that the Brazilian government was strongly dissenting from, as a matter of fact leading the opposition to the United States position in hemispheric affairs.

GORDON: Not surprising at all. That was from our point of view an appalling performance. Goulart's speech, I must say, made me very angry because he carefully avoided any mention of the United States, any indication that the United States was contributing anything to the program. He mentioned the Alliance for Progress only in the last sentence. The speech actually was a bid for Brazilian leadership of

Latin America against the United States. Its main stress was on the Geneva Conference and the idea of a bloc of underdeveloped countries against the advanced countries. This was the basic theme of it. It contained a considerable number of misstatements. I am told that there were some drafts that were even worse. I never saw those. They must have been remarkably bad.

RIELLY: It was just, of course, a week later that the

[-66-]

assassination occurred. You were in Rio de Janeiro, were you not, at the time of the assassination?

GORDON: Yes, yes, I was in my office downstairs.

REILLY: Can you tell us something about your own reaction to the news of the assassination and the reaction in Brazil in general, and in the Brazilian government particularly?

GORDON: Well, in the middle of that afternoon (our time was two hours later than Washington time) a group from the Bank of Brazil had just been in my office. They were planning to establish an office in New York, and they had come in to talk about this a little bit. As they went out our Press Officer Bill Cooper came in with a ticker clipping. That doesn't happen very often. I said, "Have you got some news, Bill?" He said, "Yes, it looks like quite bad news." It was the first flash saying that President Kennedy had been shot in Dallas. Like everybody else, I guess, when first hearing this news, I assumed that it meant he had been shot at, but that it wasn't very serious. Of course we turned on shortwave radios and put aside everything else. Within two minutes the Foreign Minister called me up and said he had heard this shocking news. Did I know any more? I didn't yet. I received several other calls.

[-67-]

Then, of course, the progression of news, worse and worse, went on very rapidly, until we got the final word that the shooting had been fatal. I was quite stunned by it. I didn't really have too much time to think. I sat down and wrote a statement. I knew we would have to have a statement to be read over the radio and for the press here, a very short statement. The main thing that went through my mind at that moment was the phrase from the Gettysburg Address about what "we the living" have to do in such circumstances.

Within ten minutes, Governor Lacerda [Carlos Lacerda] was in the office. He had heard the news on a car radio apparently while driving and at once headed over to the Embassy. And the Foreign Minister was about two minutes behind him, and there was a stream of people. And then Goulart. Goulart had been over to Niterói across the bay at a trade union meeting of some kind and had heard the first news of the shooting. It was only when he got back on the ferry boat on this side that he learned that it had been fatal. He had

me telephoned right away and asked where he could call on me and we arranged that he should come here to the house later in the evening.

We had a lot of things to attend to. We had to get word out to the Consulates. The reactions in Brazil were fantastic. If

[-68-]

Goulart had been shot, I don't think the reaction in Brazil would have been so profound. I was not here at the time of the Vargas [Getulio Dornelles Vargas] suicide. I guess that was a pretty dramatic event in Brazilian history. But the reactions, the depth of the reactions, the breadth of the reactions! A line began to form outside the Embassy. This happened at all the Consulates. People of every type, barefoot people, the poorest to the least poor, weeping, everywhere. We had a book open there for three days and we kept the Embassy open at night during this time, and there was a line around the block practically continuously. I think it thinned off a little bit on Saturday night. But there was every indication of shock and grief that you can imagine.

In political circles some odd things happened. I got a letter of condolences from Lionel Brizola, who had been making the most violent personal attacks on Kennedy, on me, and on everything having to do with American government. He always said that he loved the American people, but the American government and American business were horrible. But I take it that what stimulated Brizola was seeing what a deep effect this had among the Brazilian people. He thought he had better get on the Kennedy bandwagon.

[-69-]

It was a most extraordinary demonstration.

RIELLY: Looking back now after Kennedy and...

GORDON: There is a remark in a recent Foreign Affairs article by Philip Quigg about Latin America, in which he suggests that one reason that President Kennedy was so tremendously liked and respected a figure in Latin America was that he was the kind of man that they really all wanted to be President of their own countries.

RIELLY: That's one of the questions I had for Roberto Campos.

GORDON: I think in Brazil there is no doubt about this.

RIELLY: In Brazil.

GORDON: And the effects are still extraordinary. I go to the movies very rarely here, but I happened to see the movie about Lawrence of Arabia on the Saturday before the revolution here, Easter Saturday. There was a short

documentary news film of highlights of the previous year, 1963. Goulart appeared several times and there was no reaction to this. Kennedy appeared on the screen once. At once there was spontaneous applause from the whole audience. I am told this happens all the time.

[-70-]

RIELLY: We might turn now to the period, to some recollections and reminiscences and reflections on Kennedy and the Kennedy administration on your part. Briefly, what is your personal assessment of Kennedy's character and personality, his qualities as a leader, as a statesman, and what were his defects as you saw them?

GORDON: Well, my feelings about his personality are stated quite candidly in the article that I wrote a few days after his death, of which I have given you a copy. We might have that appended to the transcript of this interview. (See also the lecture in Recife on February 29, 1964, also appended.)

RIELLY: Certainly, it can be done.

GORDON: That article obviously has some passages which were written with a Brazilian audience especially in mind, but the remarks about the character of the man and especially the character of his personal leadership, his performance in the Presidency as an executive, are my unvarnished views. I would say the same things off the record that I said there on the record. I have already made it clear that I was not an intimate acquaintance of President Kennedy of long standing. These periodic contacts that we had beginning in early 1961 were reasonable extensive, however,

[-71-]

and I felt that I had gotten to know him quite well. I never saw him except at work, so to speak. We never had any social contacts in off time. I'm not sure whether he ever had any off time, to tell the truth. My impression is that there was very little, but I have no personal impression of what he was like when relaxing from official duties. But I had a very high regard for him as a person, as a leader.

Not that I agreed by a long shot with all of his policies. I remarked in that article that I thought of him as a pragmatic idealist and an intellectual politician. These are two pairs of opposites which are rarely found together in a single person. It was quite clear that among my Harvard friends, for example, a lot of people were distressed with the political Kennedy, or the pragmatic Kennedy. They wanted him to be more consistently idealist. It's odd because some of these, like Arthur Schlesinger, consider themselves great worshipers of Franklin Roosevelt, but then of course they never knew the living Roosevelt. They only knew Roosevelt as a history and legend, and the living Roosevelt as a person was a great deal less idealistic and much more pragmatic politician than Kennedy, and certainly a very much more difficult man to work for.

[-72-]

I knew Roosevelt only slightly. I worked under him, although a good way under, but I saw his treatment of many of his immediate subordinates. There was the business, for example, of deliberately giving the same job to three or four people and letting them all compete with one another, and keeping them on tenterhooks. This was something that, so far as I know, Kennedy never did. But some of the professional intellectuals were disappointed with him because they thought he was too practical a politician, too ready to make concessions. And obviously many of the practical politicians found him a terribly annoying intellectual, with his Harvard accent and his liking for professional intellectuals around him.

RIELLY:           How far was he a man of original conceptions?

GORDON:           I think very little. I don't think this was his forte. But I think he had a very sensitive judgment. He listened very well, very well indeed. Of course he had a fantastic capacity to read quickly and to remember—one of the best memories that I have ever known. I kept being amazed in my conversations with him, at intervals of three months or so, when he would mention names of various people in the Brazilian political scene, whom he had heard discussed before but there was no good reason for him to

[-73-]

have remembered. He had an extraordinary, blotting paper-like, absorptive capacity.

He struck me as very operational. That is, he was not reflective about things just as intellectual toys. He always wanted to know "what you could do about it." Now this, at least in the areas that I saw him operate in, had a great deal to do with the question of which kinds of people could work well with him and which could not. Clearly one had to be fairly high paced.

RIELLY:           Do you feel that during your tenure as Ambassador under Kennedy you always had Kennedy's strong personal support in doing your job that he delegated to you, sufficient authority, and the fact that you did know Kennedy, or came to know Kennedy, did this have any special effect on your relations with the State Department?

GORDON:           Well, I never went around the Department in communicating with the President. I never had any reason to. The answer to the question about support is absolutely yes. I don't suppose that this can be true of all ambassadors but I have had the fullest support that anybody could want. There were never any real issues, for example, between me and the State Department where Kennedy had to make a decision.

[-74-]

There was for a while, in the summer of 1963, a few months before the assassination, an issue within the State Department, but that got resolved very rapidly.

But so far as the Department in general was concerned, Ed Martin is one of my oldest and closest friends. We have worked together in various places since 1939, often shared offices in our earlier days. Just by coincidence we seemed time after time to have found ourselves in the same field of work. I am amused that he should be today on a ship on his way to Buenos Aires as my counterpart, a few hundred miles to the south here.

Dean Rusk, I have known even longer, although not nearly as well as Martin. We were Rhodes Scholars overlapping for two years. We knew each other slightly at Oxford and since about 1943 or '44 we have known each other quite well. There again there was never any question about support. David Bell I first met in 1950 when I was working for Harriman [William Averell Harriman] in the White House and he was part of the White House staff under President Truman [Harry S. Truman]. We are also intimate friends.

I won't say that I have gotten everything from Washington that I have wanted every time and on time, but basic backing has not

[-75-]

been a problem. How far the fact that people knew that I knew Kennedy helped in this, I don't know. In any case I didn't have the kind of acquaintance that Galbraith did, for example, so that element didn't exist.

RIELLY: Do you think that Kennedy used all the powers of the Office of President to the maximum extent in implementing United States policy in Latin America, or was he excessively influenced by United States domestic interests, for example United States business interests?

GORDON: Well,

RIELLY: Or other U.S. domestic interests?

GORDON: I think...

RIELLY: Were his foreign policy views directly influenced by domestic political considerations?

GORDON: Well, there obviously were compromises on certain things. On trade policies, on the question of whether to aid the expansion of textile industries abroad, and all this kind of thing, these are simply facts of life of the American political system which all Presidents adjust themselves to. I think that he did not, in the first operating months of the Alliance for Progress (which is to say

[-76-]

the latter part of '61 and the early part of '62) give it the entire push that he might have. But this was a problem concerning the whole AID agency situation. I think there were some mistakes made there.

The recruiting problem by the middle of 1962 was very serious. I remember when the President first talked to me about my coming down here, which I guess was in June when I came back with Stevenson. I asked, "How long do you want me to stay? I remember that you used to talk about everybody staying for the duration at least of your first term." He replied, rather ruefully, "Oh, I have long since given that up." And then later there was somebody that I wanted him to telephone. I was looking for an AID mission director, and I thought a telephone call from the President might get him released from his university. I had written a short memorandum for Kennedy, which I gave him during one of our meetings. He said, "Yes; I'll be glad to call him." I said that I had been told that he sometimes disliked telephoning people on recruiting if he were not sure in advance that they were going to accept. He laughed and replied, "Oh, I used to have that theory too, but not any more. I am quite callous on the subject now."

[-77-]

Recruiting was a real problem for him. I attribute this partly to the salary business. I don't know how many other people are in the same situation I am but there must be quite a lot. People at the Assistant Secretary level are grossly underpaid now. Not only are business salaries miles beyond those, but other professional incomes as well, including even the academic world which used to be considered the "starveling profession." I hope the Congress may cure this soon. Other things that may have...

RIELLY: One question which has provoked a good deal of interest, in the United States anyway, I think, is the extent to which President Kennedy's wife, Jacqueline, and also the other members of the Kennedy family were known in Brazil and what significance if any they had in determining...

GORDON: Oh, they were all popular hero and heroine figures. I suppose Jackie appeared on magazine covers and in movie shorts, and things of this kind, more than almost any other woman of our times in this period. This became redoubled with her superb behavior at the time of the assassination and the funeral.

RIELLY: But before, while President Kennedy was alive?

GORDON: Yes, she was a favorite character. There

[-78-]

were always picture stories about the children. And Jackie was practically a folk heroine. This whole feeling of the young family, full of vitality, was very much a part of the Brazilian popular image. The mass media here gave a great deal of attention to the Kennedy family and their doings, quite apart from American government

policies. The Brazilians really regarded them all as if they were part of their own family. This was the sense one got with the assassination—that someone’s father, uncle or cousin or someone very close to them personally had died. It was remarkable for a man who had never visited Brazil. And this sense of personal identification extended to all the members of the family.

RIELLY:           How important was the factor of religion in Kennedy’s standing among Brazilians?

GORDON:           I think it helped. The fact that he was the first Roman Catholic to be elected President of the country in the face of tradition, the Al Smith [Alfred E. Smith] business and so on, certainly helped. I don’t think it was an enormously important factor. He would have had very similar standing anyway, but it was another favorable element.

RIELLY:           Looking back at the Kennedy policy in Latin

[-79-]

America, I believe the Alliance for Progress was the basis of that policy, as it appears to you now, do you think the Alliance for Progress program will stand up as one of Kennedy’s major accomplishments?

GORDON:           I supposed a great deal depends on its future. This was conceived of as a ten-year program, maybe a little bit too short. One little episode I remember, incidentally, on the March 13, 1961 speech. Dick Goodwin had drafted a peroration phrase about how in ten years the gap might be closed. I argued with him six times about this. I said, “For God’s sake, that that out; that’s perfectly silly, the gap is eight to one, or something like that. Unless we are going into ten years of deep depression, the gap isn’t going to be closed.” But he insisted on leaving it in. Then the two of us went over the draft together with the President. He asked a few questions. He read down it very quickly in his extraordinary manner. He made a few corrections, and he had a little drilling in the pronunciation of Spanish. Dick defended the phrase and said, “Ten years—well, that’s after your second term. You don’t have to worry about that, and everybody will have forgotten.”

[-80-]

I said that it was still bad doctrine to hold out expectations that are obviously unrealizable and that somebody else might criticize him for it. Dick argued for it, so he left it in. When the President read the speech, he changed it in the reading, and the final definitive text doesn’t have this phrase any more.

Returning to the Alliance in general, in this first couple of years, or three years it will be soon, there have certainly been a lot of setbacks. The Alliance still hasn’t taken on the kind of dramatic force which those of us involved in its original conception hoped. I think

you have seen the speech I made about it at Salvador in August 1962 after the first year. Campos and I both spoke at that conference on world tensions, with rather overlapping themes. Both of us spoke in terms of the need for a political mystique, a sense of political direction for the Alliance, which it had not achieved then and I think is still essentially lacking. Conceivably the CIAP can now give it, although I have some concern on that score. I would say that this is really a case where nothing succeeds like success.

Here the future in Brazil is especially important because this is the largest country. If, partly as a result of this revolution—

[-81-]

and this is one reason I regard the revolution as such a transcendently significant phenomenon in the evolution of Latin American politics—if the nation is really set on the tracks and the Alliance for Progress is permitted to work here and becomes a major element as I think it can in development here, then people will look back on the Alliance as a great success. It has been relatively successful in Colombia.

I should say that, perhaps partly because of pride of authorship and having been personally involved, I am convinced that the Alliance for Progress kind of policy is the right policy towards Latin America. I cannot see any workable alternative. I am impressed by the fact that President Johnson [Lyndon B. Johnson], who I think was rather skeptical at the start, appears now to have come to share this feeling, and has endorsed the program with a kind of vigor which was not present in his first pronouncements.

RIELLY: Is it your impression, for example, that the Alliance for Progress program was so closely allied with Kennedy as a person that it would be impossible for anyone else to carry it out?

GORDON: Well, I haven't been in any country in Latin

[-82-]

America except Brazil since the death of Kennedy. In Brazil I would say that the Alliance for Progress may have come alive, not of course with the death of Kennedy but with the revolution. It was dying in Brazil because the Brazilian federal government was bleeding it to death. At São Paulo I was struck by the fact that there was so little support, so little willingness, indeed so much active opposition to the Brazilian efforts to get a general Latin American consensus, in effect to kill the program off, because that's what the Brazilian line there amounted to. And I was rather encouraged by the São Paulo meeting in the sense that it seemed to me that representatives of many of the countries there thought that while there were many defects, and it was too small, and there were serious trade problems, and lots of other things wrong too, the Alliance was basically on the right line and the problem was to give it more life, not to put an end to it. Perhaps I was misled.

RIELLY: I think that covers the main points. This, therefore, will conclude the interview of Ambassador Lincoln Gordon, held at his Embassy residence in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on May 30, 1964.

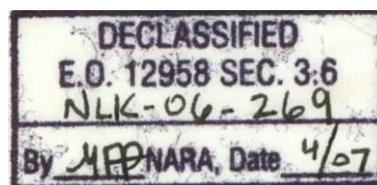
[END OF INTERVIEW]

[-83-]

Confidential Annex to Interview of Ambassador Lincoln Gordon  
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, May 30, 1964

This is a confidential supplement to the unclassified portion of the Kennedy Oral History Project interview of Ambassador Lincoln Gordon, conducted in Rio de Janeiro on May 30, 1964, by John E. Rielly, Foreign Policy Assistant to Senator Hubert H. Humphrey. Until January 1, 1982, this material may be consulted only after permission in writing has been given by Ambassador Lincoln Gordon.

This material includes certain observations made during the



[-1A-]

course of the interview, which are keyed to the appropriate page and line of the unclassified portion of the interview. The remainder consists of entire sections of questions and answers, also keyed to the unclassified text to show the sequence in the full interview.

Page 12, line 15

Berle is a difficult personality as well, and by the end of March, I think everyone was convinced that this wouldn't work.

Page 13, line 14

I also had the impression, although President Kennedy never said this to me in so many words, that he recognized sometime in March that Mr. Berle was not a good team worker, and even if he could be persuaded to accept the Assistant Secretaryship that it wouldn't work very well.

Page 17, line 5

RIELLY:           During this period, there took place the mission of Adolf Berle to Brazil. Though you were not formally involved in Brazilian affairs at that time, you probably were in a position to evaluate the mission and its outcome. What is your general appraisal of this episode? Its importance or unimportance?

[-2A-]

GORDON: Yes, I was of course very much interested in Brazil because of the research project, though at that time I had no idea of coming here as Ambassador. I talked some with Berle before his trip and we had lunch together and talked about it at length within a few days after his return. The timing of it, as I recall, was early in March of 1961, and the basic purposes were twofold: One was to try to persuade the newly installed government here of Janio Quadros to support or to join with a very active American policy toward Cuba, including if necessary collective support for military action against Castro; and second, to break the rather chilly atmosphere on financial and economic relations between Brazil and the United States which had existed ever since mid-1959 when active financial negotiations blew up because President Kubitschek was not willing to accept certain recommendations of the International Monetary Fund. Kubitschek at that time denounced the Fund and cut off relations with the Fund. The United States government then decided that it was going to stand with and by the Fund, and therefore put financial assistance to Brazil on ice.

With the Quadros election, Berle—who knew Brazil very well of course (he not only had been Ambassador here but he had come

[-3A-]

back once a year, had many Brazilian friends and Brazilians visited him frequently in New York )—felt that here was an opportunity to develop a new political relationship. He made one major error of judgment. He felt that an offer without strings of a hundred million dollars of financial assistance to help Brazil through its immediate balance-of-payments problem, in the short run pending longer term negotiations, would be such a contrast to this very chilly atmosphere that had existed for two years that, perhaps coupled with his own personality and the fact that he knew Brazil so well and was known to be a great friend of the country, might take Quadros by storm. The longer term negotiations were opened by Walter Moreira Salles who came to Washington later the same month; Campos subsequently was involved in them too.

The Berle mission was a failure; there is no question about this. It reflected a serious misjudgment of Quadros' personality and temperament. I don't think one should blame Mr. Berle for that misjudgment particularly, because lots of Brazilians also suffered from it. There was a general illusion about Quadros, both at home and abroad at that time.

In any case, the mission was a failure. It created, if anything a negative, counterproductive reaction. The hundred million was not

[-4A-]

accepted. Quadros later gave out the impression that it had almost been suggested as a sort of bribe, which of course it wasn't, but he chose to be offended by the offer, and he treated Berle very coolly. There were no photographs afterwards. There was a rather cool departure from the Palace at Brasilia, and indeed for the next few months the situation here, as Ambassador Cabot [Henry Cabot Lodge] later told me about it, was one of considerable strain. In fact the first real sign of warmth on Quadros' part toward the United States came in June at the time of Ambassador Stevenson's visit. I don't know whether a different attitude

of the United States toward Brazil at the time of the Berle visit would have made a great deal of difference. Conceivably it might, but I think in the light of evidence that has come out since, it is pretty clear that Quadros was a very psychopathic personality, and was already developing at that early stage ideas of leading a third force. He was replacing Lincoln [Abraham Lincoln] as his hero by Nasser [Gamal Abdel Nasser], and to some extent Nehru [Jawaharlal Nehru] and Tito [Marshal Tito]. To sum it up, clearly the Berle visit didn't do any good, but I also doubt whether it had a major negative influence.

Page 23, line 15

On the contrary, there was some sign of tension between the President

[-5A-]

and Chester Bowles. Bowles made a few interjections of a rather general character and the President cut him off sharply, and turned back to Stevenson (to a lesser extent to me, but mostly to Stevenson) to hear further his report of facts and impressions. So that I didn't see any tension there.

Page 28, line 6

There was one very unpleasant episode, close to a verbal fist fight, between Raul Prebisch and the spokesman for the Argentine delegation on this subject who was Arnaldo Musich.

Page 34, line 17

I understand that President Kennedy had wanted to have a change here for some time. He had offered the job to Ambassador Bunker at the very beginning of the administration. Ambassador Bunker has long had a special interest in Brazil because his daughter is married to a leading Brazilian surgeon, and he visited very often. Bunker turned this down for the same reasons that he turned down the Assistant Secretaryship. He didn't really want a full-time job then. He had been Ambassador for a good many years in various places. He wanted a more restful life, and his wife was in poor health. I don't believe anybody else was offered the Ambassadorship here until I was.

[-6A-]

Page 44, line 3

My understanding of the forces behind the scenes at the time was only limited. I came to realize as time went on what was going on behind the scenes. What was actually going on at that time was that the president of the National Development Bank, a very incompetent man called Leocadio Antunes, a great friend of Brizola's, was in effect one of the representatives of the Brizola element in the government. He was also very close personally to Goulart

(when Goulart finally fled to Uruguay a few weeks ago, Leocadio Antunes was there to meet him at the airport), and he had on his staff a number of people who were either communist party members or sympathizers, and certainly violently anti-American. They wanted to get any money out of us that they could but certainly didn't want to collaborate politically and didn't want us to get any credit for anything that might be done. They didn't at all accept the notions of the Charter of Punta del Este.

Brizola, you know, had been at Punta del Este. He walked out of the conference, walked out of the Brazilian delegation about two days after it began, very angry. He wrote a violent letter to Quadros denouncing Mariani and Campos for not taking a sort of Cuban line and breaking up the conference.

[-7A-]

Page 44, line 14

The most notable was Augusto Frederico Schmidt, at that time a very close adviser of former President Kubitschek, often regarded as the brains, the eminence grise of Kubitschek. He is an extraordinary man, a poet and a philosopher and a businessman. He was Kubitschek's representative in the early negotiations on Operation Pan American and had had some rather sever friction with the American officials of the day. This was back in the late 50's.

Schmidt, although he didn't know Moscoso personally, took a violent dislike to the idea of a Puerto Rican. He wrote various articles and he fulminated at parties, luncheons and dinners about this, saying that anybody who thinks that Latin American or big countries like Brazil can be handled the way this little insignificant Caribbean Island can is obviously wrong. He thought it was rather slighting of Latin American to have a Puerto Rican, a sort of second-class citizen idea.

This was entirely unjust in my view. If Moscoso had been appointed only because he was a Puerto Rican, there might be something in it, but obviously this was not the fact.

Page 46, line 17

The way Goulart was handling himself in those first few months

[-8A-]

was a kind of consolidating of his position, trying to persuade the center forces in the country that he was not as wild a radical, pro-communist, dangerous man as the military had thought when they tried to keep him out in August. In that phase there was nothing about his actions, and certainly nothing about the policies of the Cabinet or the composition of the Cabinet, which would have led to any question. They did recognize the Soviet Union at that time. That was on Thanksgiving Day, 1961, but this was not regarded as particularly objectionable on our part. We were a little concerned about possible abuse of the Soviet Embassy here for espionage purposes but the Czechs were already here. Also the Cubans were here and the Poles were here. We did not try to discourage this recognition of the Soviet Union in the slightest. We didn't have a policy line against that.

It is quite clear, anyway, that Goulart had very little understanding of any of these substantive points, although I think he had given some real thought to the business of the public utility purchases. The thing that made that so lively an issue was that Brizola, who was then Governor of Rio Grande do Sul, had expropriated, very unexpectedly, the telephone subsidiary of IT&T in February, early in February.

[-9A-]

Goulart thought at that time that it was probably done with a view to sabotaging the U.S. visit. At least he expressed this view, which was an interesting point.

I got word of that expropriation on a Friday morning while holding a staff meeting. I tried to telephone San Tiago Dantas, but he was on an airplane from Recife coming back to Rio. Then I tried to telephone Moreira Salles and found that he was actually at the Laranjeiras Palace here in a meeting with Goulart. I had a note taken to him in the Palace and managed to catch him on the phone before he went in to see Goulart. And I told him this news. He hadn't heard it. He was quite shocked by it. He told me the next day that he told this to Goulart and Goulart said, "Yes, I just got a telegram about this," and then said, "I wonder if my brother-in-law is trying to sabotage my meeting with President Kennedy."

Goulart was very eager to meet President Kennedy. I think he had the feeling, perhaps inspired a little bit by a visit in August '61 which Teddy Kennedy [Edward M. Kennedy], the present Senator from Massachusetts, had had here with a number of left-wing deputies from the labor party, that he could get Kennedy endorsement for him as a political personality and for some of his social reform ideas. Let's rather say

[-10A-]

"attitudes," since he didn't really have ideas.

Goulart was always very keen about what he called "cobertura," coverage, meaning having his flanks covered. He thought the Kennedy name was clearly an asset in Brazilian politics, and therefore if the Kennedy name could be linked with the Goulart name, this would be a very good thing for him. If he could say that the things he was doing were things that President Kennedy approved of, this would be a step forward for him. This, I think was the basic objective of the visit from Goulart's point of view. He was also curious to meet President Kennedy.

[At this point, the interview was broken off for lunch.]

GORDON: Let's see where were we?

RIELLY: You were referring to the fact that President Goulart wanted very much to meet President Kennedy and he was not about to let anything interfere with that.

GORDON: That's right. And the expropriation of the IT&T subsidiary by Brizola.

RIELLY: Which Goulart speculated might have been intended to prevent the visit.

[-11A-]

GORDON: That's right. Well, his reaction to the expropriation was that some peaceful negotiation should be set underway. Brizola at the start in February gave the impression that he was prepared to do that. In fact, he wasn't, but it took some time to discover that. But to come back to the visit itself, I had mentioned that the question of private companies was a significant but not in any sense a dominant theme.

Page 49, line 4

We all had reason to believe that Goulart had played a significant personal part in this. He had certainly done nothing to prevent it, and if anything had connived with it, or even stimulated it.

Goulart had brought along in his party on this visit the head of the National Industrial Confederation, CNTI it is called, a rather insignificant personality, actually I think really a puppet, a man called Riani [Clodsmith Riani]. Goulart and Riani had a breakfast meeting one day with the leaders of the AFL-CIO. My impression is that it was a rather difficult encounter. Goulart had always in his talks with me objected rather strongly to our support for the ORIT and said that we took much too narrow a view of the non-communist labor movement in Latin America. In Brazil, at least, there were many labor leaders who were neither communists nor interested in collaborating with the

[-12A-]

ORIT, and they included a large proportion of his own friends and supporters.

In any case, in the Kennedy-Goulart conversations President Kennedy made a strong point not only of his concern about possible communist-dominated Latin American labor organization, including Cuban participation, which would be directed against American participation, and probably also connected with the WFTU, but also indirectly on the question of communist influence in the Brazilian labor scene. He approached the subject delicately. In the pre-Goulart visit briefings, we had had some discussion of how we might approach this. He felt that if he engaged directly in questions to Goulart on the Brazilian scene, this might be construed as undue interference in internal political affairs, but he thought he could get to this point indirectly by discussing the problem of international labor organizations and the questions of Cuban and American participation.

Page 50, line 9

Goulart had been moderately friendly with Frondizi, although Goulart's real Argentine friends were Peron [Juan Peron] and the Peronistas. From Goulart's point of view the bad

thing about the coup in Argentina was that it cancelled the elections in which Framini [Andres Framini], for example, the Peronista

[-13A-]

Governor-elect of Buenos Aires province, had been refused the possibility of taking office. Goulart frequently talked to me about his Argentine friends and it was quite clear that he was always talking about Peronistas. This, I think, was one of the significant indicators of his own views as to what should happen in Brazil. But I don't recall this aspect of the Goulart-Kennedy talk as being terribly important.

I remember something in the descriptions which we got of the short, private talk which the two had together before the broader talks began. They had a private talk for about half an hour with only an interpreter present. Some notes were made later, and the Argentine subject apparently figured in that, but the notes did not indicate that anything of great substance was discussed.

Page 50, line 15

I remember that some of the military here, who were by then getting to be rather strong anti-Goulartists, expressed some concern.

Page 52, line 6

I think that Goulart was personally quite upset about the deposition of Frondizi, not because Goulart had any concern about democracy either in Brazil or Argentina, but because he saw that it was a defeat for the Peronistas, and to some extent a defeat for the communists there too,

[-14A-]

and he thought that indirectly the reflections on his own support groups in Brazil would be unfavorable. But of course at that time he was hiding any such sentiments under nicer clothing than the real reasons.

Page 53, line 6

The subject has come up again recently in connection with the meetings in March 1964, of all of us Ambassadors to Latin American countries in Washington, at which a New York Times article alleged that Tom Mann had announced a dramatic reversal of the Kennedy policy in this respect. That story was entirely inaccurate. There was discussion of the problem. There was a general indication that our thrust should be toward the maintenance or the restoration, as the case may be, of constitutional institutions, but also a recognition that the situations vary enormously, that the amount of constitutionality in fact varies a good deal. I think one has to be reasonably realistic about the application of the policy. I could not distinguish between the philosophy expressed by Mann and the philosophy previously

expressed by Ed Martin, when President Kennedy was still alive and with President Kennedy's endorsement, on the same subject. I was rather annoyed at the New York Times article. Of course, the recent Brazilian case was thought by some people to have demonstrated a difference in philosophy. I don't think

[-15A-]

this is true. On this I can say with some assurance—really complete assurance—that President Kennedy would have reacted exactly the way President Johnson did in the circumstances.

RIELLY: In the discussions with President Kennedy in April '62, President Goulart was reported to have placed a good deal of emphasis on the importance of meeting Brazil's social problems and in attempting to achieve this objective. Goulart was reported to have said that Brazil looks to President Kennedy for leadership. They regard him as the leader of a liberal party with advanced ideas and he expected that Kennedy would understand the need for rapid development regardless of inflation. (a) Is this an accurate report of Goulart's views, and (b) did he really believe it or was he just flattering Kennedy?

GORDON: I think something like that was said, all right. My impression is that it was said mainly with a view to Goulart's domestic interests within Brazil, that is, an attempt to characterize himself and his own labor party as somehow or other analogous to President Kennedy and the more liberal wing of the Democratic Party at home. This, I think, was really fundamentally part of his notion of political coverage—this "cobertura" which Goulart was so much

[-16A-]

interested in. Goulart himself, as I said before, did not show a great deal of interest in American economic and financial support or the ideas of active collaboration in the Alliance for Progress. He never understood these ideas.

On the question of development regardless of inflation, Goulart in these fields never had any ideas of his own. He had strong ideas of his own with respect to organization of trade unions and getting their political support. He had perfectly clear ideas on having some friends of his own in the military. He had lots of ideas on political personalities. But the man is a politician in a very narrow sense, and I would say that he had as few ideas about national economic policy, inflation, and things of this kind as a big city boss in the United States would have. These things were simply outside of his scope. So when he used phrases on these subjects, he was almost always using the phrases that somebody else had put into his mind; they just went in and then were repeated. So I would say that his expressions on this particular occasion were not so much designed to flatter Kennedy as they were designed to create this image in Brazil of a Kennedy-Goulart parallelism.

[-17A-]

This “lively discussion” you referred to probably has to do with a conversation at one end of the room over drinks before dinner at which Galbraith was expressing to Goulart some of his views about the iniquity of anti-inflation programs, and how dangerous it would be for Brazil to be guided by the reactionary views of the International Monetary Fund as Galbraith saw them. This included some strictures against the economic views of Professor Eugenio Gudin, the dean of Brazilian economists, Finance Minister back in 1954 and a very close friend and sort of patron, intellectual patron of Campos. Goulart seemed to enjoy that a great deal and apparently emerged from it with the feeling that the Kennedy administration had no interest in monetary stabilization and certainly had no interest in being in accord with the International Monetary Fund. Both of them were unfortunate conclusions for him to draw.

Page 55, line 2

President Kennedy did not emerge with any enormous regard for Goulart. He did apparently make a good impression on Goulart who emerged with a very high view of Kennedy. I think that was real.

Page 55, line 11

The visit to the SAC Base was designed—this was a suggestion

[-18A-]

of mine—to try to offset the view which some left-wing people in Brazil were propounding at that time that the Sputnik and the other apparent Soviet advances in the missile field showed that the Russians were winning the military hardware race and therefore, whatever one’s personal preferences might be, one had better get on the Russian bandwagon. According to this view, the United States was already a sort of militarily beaten power and it was only a matter of time before this would be reflected by the facts. I think the SAC Base visit had the desired effect. I never got a clear reaction from Goulart about it but I got a very clear reaction from General Krueel [Amaury Krueel], who was then the Chief of the Military Household, and from San Tiago Dantas, both of whom were tremendously impressed by the show of power. They were also impressed by the restraint and by the safeguards against accidental nuclear warfare and by the organization of the communications system there.

Page 56, line 6

So I would say that all in all, the net of it, looking at it now in retrospect, was to delay the possibility of Goulart making anti-Americanism a major domestic political weapon, which he was being urged to do by many of his friends. I think he was about ready to do

[-19A-]

this in April 1964, but he left the country just before that. Had his domestic policies been combined with vigorous anti-Americanism, this would have created a lot of serious dilemmas in our relationships, which fortunately were avoided.

When he finally was removed, he was removed purely on domestic grounds—a combination of corruption, communist infiltration and his own obvious dictatorial ambitions and the destruction of discipline in the armed forces. In this combination of factors, foreign policy played a virtually negligible part. So in all of these respects I would say that the effects of the trip were good.

Page 57, line 11

In June there was an effort by Goulart to get San Tiago Dantas nominated Prime Minister. Dantas had at that time made some very serious overtures to the far left, including some communist dominated metallurgical unions, which in turn had created suspicion of him in the Congress, and he was rejected by the Congress. Under the then constitutional arrangements, the Prime Minister had to have an absolute majority of the Chamber of Deputies to become invested. He missed it by about twenty votes as I recall it.

But it was clear that Goulart had decided to take a sharp tack

[-20A-]

to the left. On his way back from Washington, Goulart had been stricken with a mild heart ailment in Mexico. He had stopped in Mexico for an official visit there, about April 12<sup>th</sup> or so, and he came back and had to rest for a while. Then, in the latter part of April, he decided to take this rather marked tack to the left. Nobody knows quite why. At least I don't. One rumor has it that Kubitschek encouraged him not to rest on his oars because Kubitschek hated the parliamentary system. He was very anxious to have Presidentialism restored, looking forward to becoming President again himself. It is said that he went to Goulart and told him that if he left things as they were that he could stay in office all right, but that he would go down in history as a man whose powers had been emasculated.

Other people believed that Brizola brought influence to bear on Goulart. Other people believe that communist influence with Goulart was great than we at the time thought. I don't know. The one thing that is clear is that starting in May, and with increasing tempo in June, July and right on through the summer and the end of that year, 1962, he not only took a tack to the left but also began raising serious doubts about the regime.

The immediate issue was, of course, whether parliamentarism

[-21A-]

should be continued or Presidential powers restored. But behind this there were other issues which were only faintly visible at the time, their having to do with the longer run future.

Now to come to my July talk with President Kennedy, I became very disturbed about these signs. The Prime Minister who finally got in in July, a man called Brochado da Rocha [Francisco de Paula Brochado da Rocha], who was a Brizola man, was very bad news from

our point of view. Along with Brochado da Rocha, there were a number of key communist intellectuals who were playing an important part in recommending delegations of power from Congress to the Executive here. Goulart's general urging of the need for reforms, not in the sense of real reforms, but in the sense of merely demagogic preaching, designed to erect a banner of reforms without real substance under it, had begun.

There was also the failure to carry through on some of the specific commitments made by Goulart, such as the settlement of the IT&T case, which was supposed to be settled by a loan to the company's Brazilian manufacturing subsidiary from the Bank of Brazil. In the conversations in Washington, or on the airplane on the way to Chicago, Goulart and his Ministers said that this would be done within a week after the party's return. Well, by this time, two months had passed

[-22A-]

and I had made repeated efforts to get something done about this. These had been frustrated. It was clear that things were going badly from our point of view and I thought we had better review the situation. That was why I went back.

Interestingly enough, President Kennedy in that conversation asked me in some detail about the military situation here. We discussed the general situation, attitudes in the armed forces, and so on. He asked if I were satisfied with my attachés, and my answer was not wholly on the Army side. This was what led to the extraordinarily useful appointment of Colonel Vernon Walters [Vernon A. Walters], who was then our Military Attaché in Rome and who had been the liaison officer between the Brazilian Expeditionary Force and the American Army in the Italian campaign twenty years ago. His designation as Military Attaché here has, of course, been extraordinarily useful, among other things because he had become in Italy twenty years ago a very close personal friend of the present President of Brazil. Apart from this, he had a range of acquaintances in the Brazilian Army and an insight into the views and the importance of certain military groups and unimportance of other military groups. Some people in Washington, incidentally, appear to regard Walters as a "gorilla"—a reactionary. This is a view that

[-23A-]

I strongly dissent from. In fact, his intelligence contacts were with all groups in the Army. And as the situation deteriorated, the question of possible action by the armed forces became more important. This was absolutely invaluable intelligence for us in developing our own policy and strategy.

Page 58, line 6

First, a word about Goulart and his reaction to the news. This is quite an interesting episode, about which no Brazilians know because he was alone when he got this. Walters, who is also a superb linguist, had arrived a few days before this by a fortunate coincidence.

We got our first word on Sunday, October 21. Sunday morning I was called down to the Embassy to read a top secret circular telegram to all Ambassadors in Latin America

which summarized the facts and said that President Kennedy was going to make a public statement either Sunday night or Monday night. We would be given an advance text as soon as it was available. It instructed us to try to make a date with the Chief of State, with the President, not more than two hours and not less than one hour before the speech and to read him the advance text and then ask his support for the resolution in the OAS, and also in the United Nations if it came to the United Nations.

[-24A-]

On Monday, unfortunately we happened to have in town a large delegation to the Inter-Parliamentary Union. It had been scheduled for Buenos Aires but because of the coup there and the shutting of Congress, that was though inappropriate, and it had been moved at the last minute to Brasilia. Although it was only a few weeks before our election, this delegation of several American Senators and Congressman was here in Rio. On the Monday, the critical Monday, I was supposed to host at a reception for them in this house, which of course I never got to.

The communications were a little slow, since the communications centers in Washington were very, very heavily taxed during this period, and we got three-quarters of the advance text in English just in time. I had made a date with Goulart. He fortunately was in Rio that day. I just said that it was a very urgent matter and I took Walters with me because I knew he could give a very rapid, running translation into Portuguese of the text of these several messages. So there were just three of us, Goulart, Walters and myself.

I started off by saying, "Mr. President, this is by far the most serious problem that you and I have ever talked about," and went on that "absolutely incontestable evidence has come into our hands now

[-25A-]

that these are not just defensive weapons, but that offensive missile bases have been developed by the Soviets in Cuba. We are not sure whether they have missiles on them yet or not, but we have reason to believe that some are coming if they are not already there." Goulart's first reaction was, "But that's impossible; your own Secretary of State said only ten days ago that there was nothing but defensive weapons there." And I replied, "Yes, that's what we thought, but as you will see in a few minutes when I read you this speech, it isn't so." I told him that later that evening his Ambassadors in Washington, the two of them, the OAS and the White House Ambassadors, would be shown this photographic evidence. He was very much interested in that, wanted to know exactly at what time could he call Campos or Penna Marinho to hear about the nature of the evidence.

Then I had Walters read him in translation the text of this speech. I must say that he wasn't acting stupidly or thinking about other things then. His attention was really focused on this. I suspected that the thought that it was going to end up by saying that an invasion was already going on. I even had a slight feeling that he might have been disappointed that that wasn't the case, because it ended up by his being asked to accept some responsibilities and participation in the

[-26A-]

responsibility for possible collective action. But he listened intently. He doesn't know any English to speak of, but he was following the English text as Walters was translating.

He interrupted a couple of times to ask me some supplementary questions. And at the end of it he turned to me and said, "Well, if this is really true, then there's no question about our position. You know we have been defending Cuba's right to be free from invasion from the outside, including invasion by you, but if they have offensive Russian missile bases there, that's a threat not only to the United States but to the whole Western Hemisphere, including us, and we are with you." Just like that. Then we talked about the OAS resolution a little bit and he said, "This is more complicated. We are going to have a plebiscite soon and we will be a Presidential system, but we aren't yet, we are still a parliamentary system. I have got to consult the Prime Minister and the Foreign Ministry," and so on. He asked to have the text of this in Portuguese as soon as we could have it translated. So we agreed that we would go back to the Embassy, translate the documentation, including the draft resolution and the speech, and come back to the Palace later that night.

Then, of course, instead of attending my own reception, we went

[-27A-]

back to the office and had all this done. We were able to listen to the Kennedy speech being delivered in English by shortwave. We were able to check it against the advance text and to make a few corrections. There were some last minute corrections, not of any great significance. Then we went back to the Palace. We got back about ten o'clock or ten thirty at night and there in the Palace were Hermes Lima, who was then both Prime Minister and Foreign Minister (Brochado da Rocha had resigned in between and in fact had died of a stroke), San Tiago Dantas who had no office at all or official job at all but was a close Presidential adviser and already apparently was being thought about for future Finance Minister, and Carlos Bernardes [Carlos Alfredo Bernardes], the then Under Secretary of Foreign Affairs who subsequently became Ambassador to the United Nations. There were a couple of others, but these were the key people, together with Goulart.

Obviously they had been having a lot of debate and some of the advisers must have been suggesting to Goulart to go a little bit easy on this. He had not yet had the chance to talk with Campos on the telephone because Brazil time is a couple of hours ahead of Washington time, but he was expected to do that later. I think he did it while we were still there. As I recall it, we stayed until about one o'clock in

[-28A-]

the morning. Dantas was by then obviously calling the shots.

In effect, the policy line at that moment was that they would fully endorse us in the blockade to keep missiles from getting into Cuba. They were hesitant, however, about endorsing other possible action which was also in our draft resolution. In fact they sent later that night rather ambiguous instructions on the subject. By the next day some of the left-wingers had gotten into the act and started very curious press releases. Some came from the

Palace up in Brasilia, although the people up there had not participated in any of these conversations. They were deliberately designed to confused public opinion, and in case things didn't come out the way they did to leave the Brazilian government in a position to end up on either side. There were statements that Penna Marinho, the Brazilian Ambassador to the OAS, had violated his instructions or had not been properly instructed, and what not. He was actually recalled later in that week and I think the purpose was to keep the situation open. But they had fortunately voted for the key resolution.

I must say that my impression on that occasion was that Goulart's personal instincts were better than the advice that he was getting. Walters had met Goulart once years back, years ago, but hadn't seen

[-29A-]

him for a long time. His view was rather like mine that Goulart's was a good reaction. We felt it to be the reaction of a typical Rio Grande do Sul....

RIELLY: Gaucho.

GORDON: Gaucho, that's right. "By God, if somebody is going to attack you, you fight back." Now, more generally, of course there was a week of intense nervousness here as elsewhere. I saw Goulart almost every day during that week about one thing or another, including I guess the most caustic conversation on my side that we ever had at any time, in which I was complaining bitterly about this publicity campaign from Brasilia, casting doubt on their position. I said it was a hell of a thing. Their position had been perfectly clear. It was an admirable position and now it was being all muddied up. This did get him to make a clarifying statement, which helped some, but it still left a considerable amount of confusion.

Now, what was the day of the settlement finally? It was about Thursday that the Russian ships turned back, that was the most critical of all points, and I believe it was on Sunday, the 28<sup>th</sup>, that the agreement was announced for the missile base withdrawal. On the Monday

[-30A-]

I had a date with Goulart again, in the late afternoon, and he asked me to come upstairs to the private quarters in the Palace and offered a drink. The two of us were alone. We went upstairs and he got out some whiskey. I'm not much of a drinker myself, but this seemed like an unusual occasion. We raised our glasses and I said in Portuguese something about a toast to peace and prosperity. He looked at me and smiled. He has a very charming smile. He said in effect: "To hell with that. Let's drink to the American victory!" Now, that's perhaps enough on Goulart's personal reaction.

RIELLY: I believe it was only roughly about six weeks later that the visit of Robert Kennedy to Brazil took place. It was in early December.

GORDON: Mid-December, December 19.

RIELLY: Oh, December 19, just before Christmas, in 1962. Would you tell us something about the background of the visit? Also, there was a press comment shortly afterward quoting the Brazilian Ambassador in the United States, Ambassador Roberto Campos, as saying that Robert Kennedy came to Brazil to deliver an ultimatum to Goulart? Was this true? What was the overall importance of the visit?

[-31A-]

GORDON: No, the reference to an ultimatum was certainly not justified. Well, the story is this. I might go back and say a word about the question of a John Kennedy visit, because that is connected with the Robert Kennedy visit. During the briefings for the Goulart visit to Washington in April, the previous April, President Kennedy raised the question with all of his advisers, including me, as to whether he should encourage the possibility of his making a return visit to Brazil, and if so, when. Now, there was coming in October of 1962 a general election here for the whole of the lower house of Congress, two-thirds of the Senate, half of the governors, and many of the state legislatures. There was therefore a problem of the timing of such a visit in relation to the election campaign. It obviously couldn't be too close to the election. But in general we rather encouraged the ideas of a visit. In fact it was originally intended to take place in early August, which is a good season for a visit to Brazil, mid-winter, but far enough ahead of the October elections so there didn't seem to be any possibility of people construing this as direct involvement in the campaign. Indirectly, naturally, we hoped that insofar as a Kennedy visit would be a great popular success, which it certainly would have been, it might have some negative effect on anti-American candidates

[-32A-]

or anti-American propaganda in the elections.

This visit would have taken place had it not been for the political crises here which I have already referred to, which had become very severe by early July. In fact, on July 5<sup>th</sup> one candidate for Prime Minister, the present president of the Senate, was summarily removed from candidacy. Goulart, who was a shrewd politician in this kind of maneuvering, had nominated Auro Moura Andrade but on two conditions. One was that Goulart be given a signed but undated resignation and the other, that Auro commit himself to trying to persuade the Congress to approve a plebiscite for the restoration of Presidential powers. Well, Auro was approved by the Congress. He then tried, I don't know how strongly, to get congressional approval of the plebiscite. He didn't get it, went back to Goulart, and said he was sorry he had failed. Goulart promptly put the date on the resignation, namely July 4<sup>th</sup>, and published it. Then he proceeded to appoint Brochado da Rocha.

At that time we had to decide on the August Kennedy visit because the preparatory advance team was coming down. We had already done a lot of program planning, but we had to make a definite decision. It was about mid-July, and by then the visit seemed undesirable.

[-33A-]

Brochado da Rocha had been named. He hadn't yet appointed his Cabinet. It wasn't clear whether he would be confirmed in office. It was a very confused situation. There had been a small general strike. There had been some riots out here in the suburbs of Rio where several dozen people lost their lives. Goulart's own actions were becoming so dubious that I had the gravest doubts whether Kennedy should be giving him any moral support. So we recommended that the visit be called off.

President Kennedy was anxious not to be rude to Goulart, not to be offensive, and therefore he said that it should be called off only if another date were definitely fixed, and it had better not be too far in the future. He suggested a date in November which would be after the Brazilian elections and also shortly after our own congressional elections. So it was fixed for about November 15. These discussions also involved a personal long distance telephone call between Goulart and Kennedy, for which I interpreted. It was agreed that Pierre Salinger [Pierre E.G. Salinger] should come down, which he did on a very quick trip, and a joint press release explaining the delay was made. The real reason for the delay was the Brazilian political crisis, but a pretext was found in the way of legislative pressures and the coming election campaign in the United States, and so on.

[-34A-]

Kennedy instinctively felt, and he told me later in July when I went up to see him, that whatever Goulart was doing wrong, he might be somewhat restrained if this apparently cordial personal relationship between them were maintained. And this was the purpose of all these maneuvers.

We then got ready for the visit in November, and just before the October missile crisis broke at the end of October, we actually had the advance White House party down here. There were Mrs. Kennedy's advance people, Ralph Dungan and the Secret Service people, and Pierre Salinger. We had worked out the details of the program in every respect. Then came the Cuban crisis, and also some further doubts about the Brazilian scene. By then, we were not too happy about this visit taking place. We decided we could use the Cuban crisis as a good pretext for calling it off a second time. So it was postponed again without another date being set, with some vague talk about rescheduling it sometime in 1963.

Here the political situation was getting highly complicated. The plebiscite by now had been agreed on for January. We were pretty clear that Goulart was going to win the plebiscite, but in the political maneuvering preparing for the plebiscite, there had been some very

[-35A-]

ugly elements, which had made us begin to doubt whether Goulart was particularly interested in the survival of a democratic regime at all. And there had been a number of additional appointments either of communists or of violently anti-American nationalists to important positions.

[At this point, the interview was suspended briefly.]

RIELLY: We will continue to discuss now the visit of Robert Kennedy to Brazil. You were talking about the background of the Robert Kennedy visit and we had reached, just reached the point where it had been agreed that Robert....

GORDON: Not quite, not quite.

RIELLY: We had just come to the point where the arrangements for the visit were to be discussed with the Brazilian government.

GORDON: Yes, actually, I think I had just explained why President Kennedy's visit had been cancelled, including the second one in November, as well as the first one in August. At the end of November and the beginning of December, we saw a combination of two things. One was the apparently deteriorating political situation. At the same time, in that period, in the second half of 1962, there was

[-36A-]

no sign of any affirmative economic policy. There was beginning to be talk about the development of a three-year plan, and Celso Furtado had been appointed a Minister without portfolio to develop such a plan. Everyone was expecting the plebiscite to restore full Presidential powers. And there were increasing signs of communist and other violently nationalist, anti-American appointments to important places.

We felt, therefore, that there was both a challenge and an opportunity. We assumed that Goulart would win the plebiscite, and that therefore he would be making a fresh start in January of 1963. We also had been very much impressed with the prestige which President Kennedy had gained as a result of the Cuban missile base crisis. For all these reasons it seemed to us the strategic moment to try to push the direction of Goulart's administration in a favorable way. We had many worried discussions in a small staff group in my office. I called it the "compact group" of the Embassy staff, the Embassy version of the NSC Executive Committee. One of the staff members suggested the bringing down of a special emissary. I don't know which one it was because the suggestion was made while I was out briefly interviewing someone else who had come in to visit.

When I came back to rejoin the group, this suggestion was

[-37A-]

already in the air, that perhaps what was indicated was a special visitor to speak in President Kennedy's name, and to try to impress on Goulart the importance of the choices facing him. He could choose on the one hand a policy of active, positive collaboration with the United States in all kinds of policy fields, including moving forward rapidly on the Alliance for Progress, or he could choose a policy which would lead to further degeneration in our relations which would, we thought, clearly not be in the interest of either country.

Well, we discussed who this emissary might be and for obvious reasons it seemed that the person who could speak most effectively in President Kennedy's name as a person would be Attorney General Robert Kennedy. There was some discussion as to the appropriateness for this purpose of the Secretary of State or the Attorney General. What we had in mind was not really official representations of a sort that the Secretary of State might make, but rather a more personal message conveyed from John Kennedy to Goulart, and it seemed to us that the family relationship, plus the reputation that Robert Kennedy had as being extremely close to his brother, would make this more effective. We put this suggestion in a telegram and suggested that it be further discussed by me personally in Washington.

[-38A-]

So I returned early in December and there we had several long discussions. Of course I discussed the idea first with Ed Martin and then with the Secretary of State. Martin was a little concerned that the Secretary might feel that he was being slighted by a suggestion that someone else do this. On the contrary, however, the Secretary endorsed the idea, saying he thought it would be much better in the circumstances for Robert Kennedy to do this than for himself, and he recommended it to the President. Then we had a discussion with the President and several other top advisers about the merits of the visit and the kinds of things that would be said and the purposes it might achieve. It was agreed to go ahead, provided, of course, that Goulart would agree to invite Robert Kennedy. We couldn't force Robert Kennedy on Goulart, but I said I thought that could be arranged fairly easily and indeed it so proved.

We provided a half pretext by arranging that Robert Kennedy should go to Panama so that he would be half way, and then I could say to Goulart that the Attorney General was in Panama and could conveniently come down and talk about various things on President Kennedy's mind concerning Brazil. He regretted very much he hadn't been able to come in person, et cetera. I came back after a few days,

[-39A-]

sought out President Goulart at once, and was received right away. This was all done in a hurry because it was close to Christmas. As soon as I mentioned this expected nearness of Robert Kennedy, Goulart at once accepted the idea and said, "Oh, I would love to see him very much if he could come down here." We considered whether it should be in Rio or Brasilia and decided Brasilia would be a little freer from publicity. Perhaps Goulart felt also that it would be easier for him to see Robert Kennedy alone without other Ministers in Brasilia, and he wanted to do it that way. Goulart was very much given to intimate conversations with people. In fact, except for these official visits, my own conversations with

him practically all involved just the two of us. I had Vernon Walters with me to do the translation of the Kennedy speech at the time of the Cuban crisis and of course I occasionally accompanied other people, such as General Clark [Mark W. Clark], but when I called on Goulart it was almost always alone and he was alone. This was the way he liked to operate. So this was arranged very quickly.

In your question before you asked if Robert Kennedy delivered an ultimatum, and I said there was no ultimatum. There wasn't, because there was no threat. What Robert Kennedy did was to try to

[-40A-]

present to Goulart this sense of ours that there was a choice—a fork in the road—that the beginning of the Presidential regime after the plebiscite would be a very important time of decision. On the one hand there lay the possibilities of very active and defective collaboration with the United States, but it would be hard to do this if key positions were filled with communists or others whose principal interest in life was opposing collaboration with the United States.

No names were mentioned, although at one point in this long talk, Goulart asked whether Kennedy would specify names. He turned to me and I said I would not specify names. I thought that would be inappropriate but I would specify agencies, and I mentioned several agencies of the Brazilian government where it was known to everybody that there was a very significant communist infiltration. Goulart appeared in one way to enjoy the interview. He obviously was flattered by having a visit from Robert Kennedy.

RIELLY: Now, was the interview with just you, Robert Kennedy and Goulart?

GORDON: Yes, the only other person in the room was a simultaneous interpreter whom we brought. I can't remember who it was, but there were just four of us in the room. I participated

[-41A-]

some, although obviously it was mainly between the two principals, but from time to time Goulart would turn to me and bring me into the conversation. What he said at the end was that he appreciated the visit and he understood the point and he thought that... I should mention that there was one other point made by Kennedy, which was that we were terribly troubled by the total absence of economic policy. We had a feeling of inflation getting higher and higher, of general administrative mismanagement getting greater and greater, of an increasingly chaotic situation.

On that point, Goulart readily agreed. He said this was all the consequence of the parliamentary system, but once Presidential powers were established, there was going to be a three-year plan and a strong Cabinet and these problems would be taken care of. On the communist infiltration side, he said he understood the point and he didn't wholly deny that there was a problem here. There were various historical reasons for it, but when the

Presidential powers were restored, we would notice, not a sudden change from night to day, but a gradual improvement in this particular respect.

Some secondhand reports thereafter indicated that when he was asked by San Tiago Dantas and others about this conversation, he said

[-42A-]

something to the effect that the Americans were really pretty simple-minded and there would be no difficulty in continuing to fool them. Whether that's true or not, I don't know. This was reported indirectly and may not be true. It certainly fits with subsequent experience. Well, that was the visit. The Attorney General himself left feeling that he had probably made the basic points he wanted to make, but certainly not feeling that he had accomplished a great deal. Subsequent history showed that he hadn't, but it was a good try.

Page 62, line 10

We continued to be concerned, however, by some political elements in the situation. I had had a long talk with Goulart in Brasilia just before leaving, in this case with Roberto Campos present. Campos was back in Brazil in early March, a couple of days before I went to Washington. It was the night that the lobster war between Brazil and France broke out. We had dinner with Goulart in Brasilia and a long talk before and after, as well as during dinner, just the three of us. We reviewed some of the political developments since the Robert Kennedy visit, and I raised some questions about the attitudes of some of the elements in the new administration. The Labor Minister, Almino Afonso, and the Commander of the First Army, General

[-43A-]

Osvino Alves, were the two most striking ones, but there were also questions about the Chief of the Civil Household, Evandro Lins, now a member of the Supreme Court, and several technicians in the Presidency, including some of the group which had worked closely with Brizola and had been in the National Development Bank. As I questioned Goulart in the face of the kinds of indications he had given—I wouldn't call them commitments, since there were no specific commitments—to Robert Kennedy, he was rather defensive about these people. He said that the technicians were really of no importance. Brizola had wanted much more than that and he, Goulart, had resisted this and he thought the people he had appointed were a small price to pay. (His relations with Brizola would be worth two or three hours' discussion in themselves but they are a long way away from our subject.) But I went to Washington with a certain sense of malaise about this.

Dantas of course himself is a mercurial character. He had been through a phase of heavy flirtation with the communist labor unions in June the year before when he was defeated for the Prime Ministership. But for the moment at least he appeared to be strongly on a track in line with the Charter of Punta del Este and in collaboration with the

[-44A-]

United States. And being an able man in this period before his health began to show serious signs of deterioration, a very strong minded man, there seemed to be hope that the thing could really be pulled off, provided that he would get Goulart's backing.

Page 63, line 9

RIELLY: It was generally agreed that Dantas was a strong man both in the Quadros government during the short period he served it and even more so in the Goulart government. Others have alleged that Dantas was very much an opportunist and that his....

GORDON: I don't think he worked for Quadros, did he?

RIELLY: Yes, he was Foreign Minister under Quadros.

GORDON: No, no, Afonso Arinos was the Foreign Minister under Quadros. No, Dantas was appointed Foreign Minister by Goulart—by Tancredo Neves as Prime Minister. No, the Foreign Minister under Quadros was Senator Afonso Arinos de Mel Franco.

RIELLY: I had the impression that he was also in the Quadros government. At any rate, there still seems to be a good deal of controversy about what kind of a man Dantas really is. It is not doubted that he is able. He is a strong man. Is it in your opinion that he was an opportunist, who moved leftward with the tide because he knew that

[-45A-]

this was the direction Goulart was moving?

GORDON: I'm not sure that it was Goulart so much. I think he was interested in his own future. He clearly had Presidential ambitions at this time. I think he subsequently lost this because he knows his own health is very weak, but at that time I think he was looking upon himself as a possible candidate for the left, not the far left, but a sort of center and left-of-center coalition, really the PTB-PSD coalition. In '65, I believe, he thought that he might well displace Kubitschek as the major candidate, and in particular might get Goulart's support. This is really why he joined the labor part in the first place as I understand the history. You know his political history is that he started as a young man as a fascist, in the so-called integralista party in the 30s, and then during the war and shortly thereafter stayed out of politics and practiced law very successfully. He is one of the best corporation lawyers in the country, and made a considerable fortune at this. Then he decided to go back into politics. One would normally have expected him, being a rather well-to-do lawyer, to join either the UDN or the PSD parties, or one of the smaller moderate

parties. But he looked around, thought that the labor party was likely to be growing in the future as more

[-46A-]

and more people got votes, felt that its leadership was quite weak, and that therefore the opportunities for making a political success for him there were greater. I think that was really, was really.... Opportunism is a hard word, but it was a rather coldly calculated judgment of where he might most successfully make a political career, rather than a matter of conviction. In that sense, the term opportunism might be used.

Page 65, line 2

A good deal of it, I think, was really a result of a special personal promotion by the Brazilian Ambassador in Rome, Hugo Gouthier, who was very anxious, I believe, to become Ambassador to Washington. He had known Kennedy slightly during the war and always pretended to Goulart that he was really an intimate personal friend, a pretention which has I believe no real foundation. I think this meeting was arranged by Gouthier partly with this in mind. Actually, there had been some advance discussion of a possible meeting. I was in Washington in the last few days of June. I missed President Kennedy that time because he had already left for Europe by the time I got there. But there had been some discussion before I left Brazil. There was also some press speculation here, but about two days

[-47A-]

before we were given to understand that there would be no meeting, that Goulart wasn't going to seek it and we knew that Kennedy certainly wasn't going to seek it. We sent some briefing materials to Kennedy and his companions on that voyage anyway, just in case, which turned out to be useful.

Page 65, line 9

(This subject, of course, is one on which Campos feels very strongly, since he was the agent of the government in signing a memorandum of understanding which he was instructed to do, which many people afterwards called the "Roberto Campos memorandum," as if he had done it on his own rather than pursuant to instructions, which is not so.)

Page 65, last line

Now things began to take a very curious turn. When I delivered that letter to Goulart, which was in Brasilia, there were just the two of us there. He read it. He said, "This is a very good letter." He said, "There is one little point about the American and Foreign power settlement. I tried to indicate to President Kennedy that I hoped the question of the value could at least be re-examined." But otherwise he seemed to like it very much. And he was very cordial

[-48A-]

in his description of the Rome meeting.

Shortly thereafter, however, Goulart's new Palace Guard, including Evandro Lins, who had become Foreign Minister, Darcy Ribeiro—then Chief of the Civil Household and becoming an increasingly important element in the picture—and some others got hold of the letter. They apparently persuaded Goulart that it was a dreadful letter, that it was really insulting, and what not. And Evandro Lins drafted, and got Goulart to sign, a really nasty answer which we decided not to reply to, but which is in the archives. That was the end of the Kennedy-Goulart correspondence, by the way, that exchange.

Things from then on really started a downward spiral here, both domestically and in our relations. It was clear from then on that Goulart had made up his mind that he was going to make a real drive for building up his so-called labor and military dispositivos—power support groups—and then push for a coup to continue himself in power. I wrote a long telegram with this conclusion in it sometime in late July or early August.

Page 66, line 19

And then the conduct of the delegation was appalling, except for

[-49A-]

Carvalho Pinto, the head of the delegation, who was very decent through this, but who didn't really know what some of the delegation members were doing. It included all sorts of efforts to develop sentiment against the States. They thought that the fact that Harriman had gone to Buenos Aires and had trouble with the Argentines on the oil contract cancellation meant that the Argentines were ready to join them in a strong, anti-American move. I am happy to say that the Argentine delegation conducted itself very well and wasn't going to have any part of this. And the Brazilian effort was a failure.

Page 66, line 20

RIELLY: Your last visit to Washington had been in October in connection with the preparations for the Inter-American Economic and Social Council. Would you like to make some comment about your final meeting with Kennedy?

GORDON: Oh, yes. We had a very thorough discussion of the Brazilian situation with a Cabinet level group, top people from State, CIA, Defense, the Attorney General was there, and the President. This was a long review, and a very worried one in which I reported on the situation in summary and we discussed various possible contingencies, including the contingency of a civil war in which

[-50A-]

We might possibly have to get involved. Some military contingency planning which had already been started was accelerated. We did some economic contingency planning both ways, positive and negative. We discussed again, without much conclusion, what possible means if any we could use to try to get Goulart back on some sensible sort of track. It was a very painful review.

President Kennedy asked whether I thought that a personal visit on his part might possibly be helpful. He was still willing to consider this, and I had suggested at one point the possibility that he might go to the ECOSOC meeting himself. Well, that turned out not to be very practical, but he was quite prepared to consider a visit at some point late last year or early this year, late '63 or early '64. It is painful to reflect that if he had gone to the ECOSOC meeting in São Paulo, he would not have been in Dallas on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. But there was no doubt again of his tremendous interest.

I might mention one other thing which is significant of his interest. You will recall that at the time of the expropriation of the IT&T subsidiary in Pôrto Alegre in February 1962 before the Goulart visit, an upper middle level State Department official on a Saturday had put out a statement condemning the action and talking about the bad effects it

[-51A-]

would have on private investment and on American aid. The President was furious when he read this and he called up Bob Woodward, the Assistant Secretary of State at the time, and asked, "Who is trying to undermine my Alliance?"

But to return to October, 1963, this was a long and very thoughtful discussion of all the possible alternatives and their pros and cons and included a good deal of planning for contingencies. Of course, we also discussed the likelihood of domestic resistance to Goulart here. I won't say that we foresaw exactly what developed but we saw some of the possibilities. I stressed, as I think I have mentioned to you at various times when we met in Washington, the importance of the state governors, of Congress, of the press, of the armed forces and of the non-communist elements in labor and the students, all as elements which were still significant centers of resistance to Goulart and in favor of a progressive and democratic Brazil. And President Kennedy was very keen on this. Well, that was the essential content of that last talk of ours.

Page 74, line 8

This, I think, is the reason for Ed Martin's success and Bob Woodward's relative unsuccess in the Assistant Secretaryship. Woodward is a very

[-52A-]

Intelligent, knowledgeable man, with a fine character, but he was not prepared to operate quite at the pace that Kennedy himself did and demanded of others. The reason that Ball made a success with Kennedy and Bowles did not is that Bowles is fuzzy and Ball is sharp. Kennedy had a very sharp mind, and didn't like vague ideas which didn't have a clear operational point. I think one sees this in various fields.

I think the great confidence that Harriman won with Kennedy is another sign of this. Harriman is a sharp man and a very operational man and in spite of his seventy-two years a quite high paced man, a man who knows how to apply very rapidly the remarkable wisdom that he has absorbed in his thirty or forty years of very active public life. These were qualities that Kennedy seemed to respect.

Page 75, line 3

Some of the people in INR found it hard to believe that Goulart was as dangerous and unpleasant a character as I was describing him. They apparently became convinced that my judgment had been badly affected personally because some of Goulart's associates had fabricated a story about an alleged meeting of mine here in the Embassy which didn't take place. They felt that this experience had warped my judgment. I think this is one case where one can say one "told them so" without much difficulty.

[-53A-]

Page 75, line 10

Martin and I had some potential mild differences at one point around June or July '63, which we ironed out together. They really were more in the contingency field. Ed became concerned about our possibly getting involved with right-wing anti-Goulart plotters, but after some considerable discussions in Washington and as the situation itself evolved, these things disappeared.

Page 77, line 4

For example, during most of 1961, Henry Labouisse [Henry R. Labouisse], now our Ambassador in Athens, was AID Administrator-to-be but he was never clearly supported. I think the President should have made up his mind much earlier, either to appoint him to the job and give him full backing or to put somebody else in it. This was a real weakness and it was one of the things that started the AID off on a bad foot.

Page 82, line 19

RIELLY: For example, last week in Santiago, Chile, I asked a leading Chilean political leader, Senator Eduardo Frei [Eduardo Montalva Frei], about the Alliance for Progress in Chile, and his reply was simple and direct. He said that insofar as we are concerned, the Alliance for Progress died with Kennedy. Is it your feeling that this is a widely

[-54A-]

held view in leading circles in Latin America, particularly in Brazil?

GORDON: I'm surprised, actually, to hear this remark of Frei. I had not heard of that as being a general sentiment in Chile, certainly while Kennedy was still alive.

Page 83, line 15

RIELLY: You mentioned earlier that President Kennedy had said that one of his difficulties in choosing ambassadors, and I think this would probably extend also to choosing other key aides in Washington to implement his Latin American policy, was the fact that he found very few activists of the sort that he wanted from the traditional Foreign Service. One of the things most criticized about Kennedy during the first year or year and a half, particularly by the career Foreign Service, were some of the individuals whom he chose as his principal advisers in Latin America in Washington, and as one travels about Latin America one continually hears complaints about this even today, two or three years later. The man who is always singled out for special mention, and a man who was very important in the early years of the Kennedy administration, is Mr. Goodwin, Richard Goodwin. Would you care to comment in general about the key Kennedy aides in Washington who advised him on Latin American

[-55A-]

affairs, people like Goodwin, Dungan, Moscoso, Schlesinger, who were not from a career diplomatic background?

GORDON: Yes. These are all quite different types of people. In the first phase, it seems to me that among these four that you mentioned, and I think they are the right four, Goodwin was by far the most influential. Then at a certain point, of course, Berle came onto the scene as a major factor. I had never met Goodwin before the first meeting of this post-election Task Force in late November 1960. During the next year, including a long visit of his here at Christmas time in 1961 when we were working on preparations for the political Punta del Este meeting with San Tiago Dantas who was then Foreign Minister, I saw a great deal of him. We had worked intimately together on the development of the Alliance for Progress materials, on the agenda for the first Punta del Este meeting where he was in the delegation, and then whenever we were in the same town, either here or in Washington, after I became Ambassador. And I came to have a lot of regard for him personally.

He is a brilliant fellow. He writes extremely well. He didn't have very much background about Latin America. This was one of the reasons for the complaints and I think a justified reason. I think

[-56A-]

he accepted too easily some stereotypes, some of which came from Berle. One was the supposed ease with which one could find everywhere in Latin America some center-left group corresponding to Muñoz Marin and Rómulo Betancourt, the sort of "Democratic

Action” movement. One of the elements in our first Task Force report, and this part was written by Berle, was the idea of trying to develop and stimulate all over the continent a Democratic Action type of political movement—I think Berle’s phrase was a “democratic political international” as well organized and presumably more effective than the communist political international.

I didn’t criticize this idea in the Task Force; it seemed to me like a very attractive idea. But the more I got to know about politics in various countries, the more difficult it seemed to be, because one couldn’t find Muñoz Marin and Betancourt and Lleras Camargos in many of the countries. Dick Goodwin, I think, not being too knowledgeable, rather took it for granted that these could be found everywhere.

Another case is the slogans about the reforms. This is a very delicate problem. As with all very good writers—and I regard Dick as a very good writer—occasionally the fine phrase would come to

[-57A-]

overweigh in significance the objective thought and facts. But, on balance, my personal view is that Dick got too far too soon. That sounds like an old man’s point of view. I was rather precocious myself, although not as precocious as he, and I like to see young people in important jobs. I do think that in Dick’s case, however, it really was a bit too soon.

He lacked enough diversified experience, and this was one of the things which made his relations with many people in Washington extremely difficult. After all, being a personal assistant to the President is a very delicate role, particularly if you are an extremely young man. One mustn’t throw one’s weight around too much, and on the whole Dick did, and this created a great deal of antagonism. I never felt this myself. We got along very well and still do. I see Dick quite often when I’m back in town, but I could easily understand how and why the antagonism developed, and for a chap...how old was Dick at this time; twenty-eight or so—hobnobbing with Latin American Presidents—, this, I think, created some troubles.

As to Arthur Schlesinger, I don’t think he was ever really a significant adviser on Latin American affairs. My impression, at least, was that Arthur was very much on the fringe. Now he may

[-58A-]

have worked on some things in the educational and cultural exchange field. I believe he did. So far as the substance of the administration’s policy toward Latin America was concerned, I never had the impression of any major participation. There may have been some in the Caribbean area, the Cuban case, in the Dominican Republic with Bosch, and so on. This is an area which, as I said before, I knew nothing about and still know nothing about it. Sometimes I feel I’m happy in that respect.

Dungan in the first phase was not very active, but came to occupy an increasingly effective role. I think he handled himself exactly the way a White House aide should, which is to say that he had ideas and he played a very useful part, but never in an overbearing way, never abusing the fact of his association with the President. He was a remarkably effective link between the person of the President and the people with the line responsibility, like Ed

Martin and the others. And I regard him as an extremely able fellow. I hope he stays in the government service.

Now Moscoso, of course, was in a quite different position. He was Ambassador to Venezuela at the beginning where he did extremely well. His personal intimacy with Betancourt in those critical days

[-59A-]

was a very, very valuable thing. He recommended a number of policies in the economic field, especially, which I am sure contributed a great deal to the survival of the Betancourt government. The fact is that some of the groups in the Venezuelan Army and business circles came to support Betancourt, whereas at the time that Teddy went there, many of them were ready to ditch him. All this helped in fact to keep the regime going through the full term.

As Coordinator of the Alliance, my impression is that the President was a little disappointed with Teddy. Again it's this question of sharpness and pace. There is no problem about pace in Teddy's case. He's high paced, but Kennedy had a very razor-like logical sharpness and the ability to sort out issues into the more and less important, and to concentrate on the more important ones, get those decided, and then stick with the decision. These are not, I think, Teddy's fortes. And I sense some tension at a number of meetings where the two were present. I heard the President cut Ted off short on a number of occasions in a somewhat impatient way, leaving me the sense that he was a little unhappy with this. And of course Kennedy had a tremendous personal enthusiasm about the Alliance. He wanted it to be successful. So did Teddy. In this

[-60A-]

respect they were certainly on the same line. These would be my principal comments about these four.

I think the Goodwin role was unsustainable unless he had been made Assistant Secretary for Latin American Affairs. I gather that at one time he at least himself thought that this might be possible. I don't think it would have been wise. The making of him as Deputy to Ed Martin was bound to lead to friction, and it did so with great speed. In due course the President quite wisely decided that if he had to make that choice, he should choose Martin.

[-61A-]

## ADDENDUM

### Ambassador Lincoln Gordon's Speech at Recife Faculty of Economics

#### President Kennedy: The Man and His Economic Policies

February 29, 1964

When you decided on September 30, 1963, to elect President Kennedy as your paraninfo, you bestowed upon him an honor he valued highly. John F. Kennedy was a man of many concerns... He was deeply sensitive to the need for well educated men as leaders of modern societies. He had himself devoted a substantial share of his university studies to economics and he relied heavily—although never uncritically—on the advice of professional economists in the formulation of both domestic and foreign policies. He had a profound interest in Brazil, and especially in the challenge posed by the relative economic backwardness of this great Northeastern region. For all these reasons, he thought it especially significant that he was singled out for honor by this Class.

In our last personal talk together, at the beginning of October, President Kennedy spoke to me once again of his desire to visit Brazil and to see at firsthand this great nation, its already remarkable accomplishments in building a civilization in the tropics, and its potentialities for becoming within his own normal life span a thoroughly modernized society playing a leading part among the free nations of the globe.

Had he been able to come here and talk to you in person, President Kennedy would, no doubt, have used this occasion to discuss his economic philosophy and to relate that philosophy to the problems of development—development in Brazil, in all of Latin America, in developing countries throughout the world, and in the United States—problems in whose effective resolution he felt we all have a common interest. As his representative, having had the privilege of hearing his thoughts and observing his actions at close range, I shall try this afternoon to present to you some of the essential points which he would have presented with far greater eloquence.

President Kennedy's economic policies were a direct outgrowth of his political philosophy. The belief in human freedom as a fundamental value was his point of departure. The roots of this belief lay both in his religious faith and in his humanistic concerns. He conceived of freedom not as a mere juridical abstraction but as a dynamic condition in which human beings might realize their potentialities to the fullest. For him, a free society meant neither anarchy, nor mob rule. It meant rather, an effectively working system of pluralistic social institutions—religious organizations, business enterprises, labor unions, farm cooperatives, professional associations, universities, and others

—held together by representative democratic government in a moving equilibrium in which growth and innovation are fostered and in which professional administrators and elected political leaders are ultimately responsible to a freely informed and actively participating public opinion.

Squarely in the political tradition of Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt, and Harry Truman, he believed in active government—not government trying to do inefficiently what the private sector can do far better, but government as a propulsive force for growth and for constantly greater social justice. Social justice meant to him above all true equality of opportunity. His most important objective in domestic political life was to remove the last remaining barriers of racial discrimination which denied such equality to many American citizens of color. He had a deep appreciation for the role of education in providing equality of opportunity—in enabling people however humble their origin to make the best use of their natural talents. And he felt equally keenly the need to cultivate excellence for the more gifted—excellence to provide responsible political and social leadership and excellence to maintain progress on the frontiers of science and technology and on the cultural frontiers of the human spirit.

At the same time, he was convinced that freedom was not only essential to the highest social and spiritual aspirations of humanity, but was also the most effective means for achieving material progress. He was fond of quoting Benito Juarez, the great Mexican patriot and contemporary of Lincoln, who said that “Democracy is the destiny of future humanity.” And when he initiated the Alliance for Progress in a speech to the representatives of Latin American in Washington at the White House three years ago, the core of his thinking lay in the following sentence: “Our unfilled task is to demonstrate to the entire world that man’s unsatisfied aspiration for economic progress and social justice can best be achieved by free men working within a framework of democratic institutions.”

For President Kennedy, tyranny—the reverse of freedom—was also no mere abstraction. He had a profound knowledge of history. He was well aware that tyranny and oppression—the war of man against man—had been the normal lot of mankind in most of the world over thousands of years of recorded human experience. He also knew that the greatest achievements of the human spirit had occurred in free societies—in the Greek city-states, the Roman Republic, the Italian cities of the Renaissance, and in Western Europe and the Americas during the last few centuries. As a young man—about your present age—he had witnessed England’s heroic resistance in 1940 to the opportunist doctrine which proclaimed that fascism would inevitably triumph. For the remainder of his life, the figure of Winston Churchill as the leader of that resistance remained for him the towering example of a profile in courage.

And Kennedy was keenly aware of the new tyranny in modern dress—the Communist system which employs the most reactionary methods of age-old dictatorships while professing to serve the interests of the common man. He was skeptical of the conventional political classification of left and right, knowing that at the extremes they became indistinguishable forms of tyranny. He could see no significant difference between the police

state, the monopoly of information in government hands, the one-party organization, the systematic use of terror, and the imperialist expansionism of Hitler's Germany and of Stalin's Russia. It was one of

[ -2- ]

His fondest hopes that with greater maturity and a degree of material prosperity, the Soviet Union would come in due time to practice, as well as to preach, truly peaceful coexistence. But as long as the agents of international communism continue their efforts to terrorize the innocent villagers of Vietnam, to sabotage by violence the working of representative democracy in Venezuela, and to capture power elsewhere by corruption, propaganda, infiltration, and subversion, he knew that liberty could be preserved only at a heavy price and with unsleeping vigilance.

As to how free societies should best organize their economic affairs, Kennedy had no doctrinaire preconceptions. Indeed, a salient feature of his conception of democracy was his enthusiasm for the diversity and dissent which democracy fosters and depends upon. He recognized the fact and the right of other individuals and other nations to think differently. He appreciated and responded constructively to the rising desire of peoples throughout the globe to control their destinies in their own manner. He understood that the paths to economic progress need not follow the precise experience of the United States or other presently highly developed nations. He did indeed believe that there was much in our experience from which other peoples could benefit, and he wanted to help them to do so, adapting that experience each to its own special needs and conditions. At the same time, he believed that we had much to learn from others. He was proud of his nation and his nationality, but he despised the emotional excesses of chauvinistic nationalism, knowing what tragedies such nationalism had brought to mankind and seeing increasing international interdependence as the only possible path toward world peace and human betterment.

For Kennedy, the study of history was not a romantic interest in quaint folklore or a nostalgic longing for some hypothetical golden age of the past. It was rather a key to the understanding of the present and the future. It made him keenly aware of the universal fact of change and the possibilities of change for better or for worse. Confident of the capacity of free men to guide the process of change, he sought always for new patterns, new applications of the fantastic technological advance of our generation, and new institutional arrangements to put them to effective use. As a pragmatic idealist, he rejected doctrinaire systems of thought in favor of workable solutions to concrete problems—whether problems of social organization, of economic growth, or of international tension. Hence his profound respect for the intellectual qualities of science and scholarship. He always demanded hard facts and objective judgments; he pursued the logical inference. On the great political issues which he confronted as our President, he had a clear view of the goals—inter-racial harmony at home, a growing community of purpose and of action among the free nations of the Western world, a major acceleration of economic and social progress in less developed countries, and a system of arms control which would free mankind from the nightmare of universal nuclear destruction. The changes he sought were revolutionary in their effects, but he pursued them

by evolutionary means, because history had taught him that evolutionary change is durable whereas violent revolution normally brings in its wake the phases of terror and reaction.

How was this philosophy of President Kennedy applied to problems of economic policy? Both at home and abroad, it meant a concentrated effort to accelerate economic growth and to secure a broader and fairer distribution of economic output.

[ -3 - ]

Within the United States, he sought and achieved a new forward impulse in over-all growth rates. However advanced our nation might seem in relative international terms, Kennedy by no means considered economic development to have come to an end in the United States. He placed great emphasis on the stimulation of science and technology to open up new opportunities, for economic and social progress. Accepting with realism the fact that a financially interdependent world sets limits to the flexibility of monetary policy, he concentrated on fiscal policy as the major broad economic stimulant to greater growth rates. He sought, specifically, to reduce taxes in order to stimulate investment, production, employment, and consumption in the private sector. He foresaw that this would not only increase growth rates, but would also provide additional revenues for governmental agencies at all levels to finance needed public services without resorting to massive budgetary deficits, which Kennedy opposed as generators of harmful instability and inflation. In his 1961 message to Congress on economic recovery and growth, Kennedy described inflation as “a cruel tax on the weak” and “the certain road to balance-of-payments crisis.” (The relevance of these remarks to the Brazil of today I leave for judgment to you and to other Brazilian economists.) In this as in other respects, President Johnson has carried on where President Kennedy’s work was interrupted, and he was able to sign only two days ago the major tax revision law just passed by our Congress.

On the distributive side, Kennedy from the very start stressed the need to tackle the problems of regional underdevelopment and of pockets of poverty. His efforts to provide greater welfare for the aged, to renew the nation’s urban centers, to intensify training and relocation to assure the rapid re-employment of workers affected by technological unemployment—these and other programs were directly aimed at assuring a more satisfactory distribution of income and wealth and the widest possible sharing in the affluence which is afforded by the over-all performance of the American economy.

On the international front, likewise, more rapid economic growth and a broader and fairer distribution of income were again the basic themes of Kennedy’s economic programs and policies. The instruments included the creation and strengthening of multi-lateral economic institutions, the opening up of broader trading opportunities, and the greatly enlarged flow of financial and technical resources from the more advanced to the less developed nations.

On a worldwide basis, he promoted measures to increase international liquidity so as to rule out the danger of an internationally propelled deflationary spiral of the kind which had

destroyed world trade and brought economic disaster to many nations thirty years ago. He won from our Congress—and this was not easy—broad new authority for tariff reductions as a basis for the “Kennedy round” of international tariff negotiations now under way. He encouraged, as an urgent necessity, expanded assistance to developing countries from all the industrialized nations of the free world, on the basis of liberal financial terms which would not store up new balance-of-payments difficulties for the future. He supported the stabilization of markets for key primary commodities, and in closer cooperation with Brazil helped to make a reality of the first serious world-wide effort at an international coffee agreement.

[ -4 - ]

Within this broad framework, no program was closer to his heart than the Alliance for Progress. Why did he have this special interest? It was not merely a question of combating the danger of Communist penetration of the Western Hemisphere, although Kennedy did indeed have good reason to lament that the new masters of Cuba had betrayed their promises to restore democracy and liberty to the Cuban people and had converted that island into a Communist satellite nation with a more tyrannical apparatus of thought control and police repression than Batista had ever dreamed of imposing. For Kennedy, what enlisted his most intense enthusiasm was the conviction that a concentrated series of efforts for national economic and social development in Latin America, backed by effective cooperation from the United States and other friendly countries, could bring the economies of this continent fully into the modern world in a relatively short period of time.

Compared with other underdeveloped regions, he saw Latin American as a highly privileged continent. Despite the high rate of population growth, Latin America, in contrast with South Asia, possesses ample land in relation to its present and prospective population. Unlike much of newly independent Africa, tribal traditions and loyalties are not an obstacle to modernization. With great natural resources, with intelligent and mobile populations, with open frontiers, and sharing in the liberal traditions of the Western world, Latin America faced, in Kennedy’s judgment, no problems that could not be resolved if energies could be channeled through democratic planning toward sustained investment in human and material resources, toward technical and institutional improvement, and toward the economic integration of the continent.

This does not mean that he considered the task easy. He was well aware of the many obstacles to smooth and effective growth and to accelerated social progress—the bad health, poverty, and illiteracy that still plagues much of the continent, the regional imbalances both among and within countries, the distorting effects of large-scale inflation in several nations, the disordered urban concentrations, the weaknesses of administrative mechanisms, the need for wider trading opportunities to increase the capacity to import, and the existence of psychological resistances to change in some sectors. Nevertheless, he believed that all of these problems could be resolved if diagnosed systematically and confronted pragmatically.

In this belief, he felt fortified by the Brazilian experience of recent decades, by the fact that yours is in sense a stagnant nation. He knew that Brazil had enjoyed a growth rate of almost seven percent per year for over a decade, and had already created in the center-south a major industrial center. He saw other similar centers developing in Mexico and Colombia and Argentina, and beginning to develop in Chile and Venezuela and elsewhere. Further structural change was clearly in order, but structural change was already well under way as a result of investments in transportation, in power, in industrialization, in improved agricultural productivity, in education and in public health. The problem was to accelerate these processes, to bring additional outside resources effectively to bear in support of them, and, in the words of the Charter of Punta del Este, "To enlist the full energies of the peoples and governments of the American Republics in a great cooperative effort to accelerate the economic and social development of the participating countries of Latin America."

[ -5 - ]

I mentioned before that President Kennedy devoted special interest and attention to the problems of Northeast Brazil. Almost two years have elapsed since he wrote to President Goulart on April 13, 1962, enthusiastically endorsing the special agreement between our countries to cooperate in an intensive regional development effort in this region. He had seen the success of efforts in other depressed regions to speed up their relative development through intensified investment and closer integration with their more advanced sister regions, and he knew that this could be done only if investment resources could be found on a substantial scale from other parts of the country and from outside. In these two years, a good deal has been accomplished, but it is still only a beginning.

And this is true of the Alliance for Progress as a whole. Reviewing the program, a few weeks before his death, President Kennedy felt by no means satisfied. As a realist, he appreciated well that the beginning of any sustained and truly worthwhile effort always has its disappointments. Like Presidents Lleras Camargo and Juscelino Kubitschek, however, he had considered afresh the Charter of Punta del Este and he remained convinced that its objectives were sound. But more was needed to make them practically effective. As Ambassador Harriman said at the inter-American Ministerial meeting in São Paulo in mid-November "What is needed now... is a greater multilateralization of effort and strengthened political leadership. This is a matter for all of us acting collectively. We for our part are ready to give the fullest support toward a major new impetus to the Alliance for Progress."

As a result of that meeting at São Paulo, all the participating Governments agreed to the creation of a new Inter-American Committee on the Alliance for Progress, to be led by the former Finance Minister of Colombia, Dr. Carlos Sanz de Santamaria. Through this new instrument, patterned after the European organization which played a vital role in the success of the Marshall Plan, we believe that a new cooperative impulse can be given to the Alliance, its operating defects overcome, and the achievement of its objectives assured, provided that all the member governments give to the effort their whole-hearted and sustained support.

Did the bullets fired by a madman on that tragic afternoon of November 22 put an end to all the high hopes inspired by the life, the work, the personality of your chosen paraninfo? So far as the United States is concerned, the answer is most certainly “No.” President Johnson, in his first three months in office, has shown an unshakable determination to carry on what President Kennedy began, to make of these years a Kennedy Era in both domestic and foreign policy. A special interest in Latin America has already become a hallmark of the Johnson Administration. Within two weeks, I and my colleagues from all over the hemisphere will meet with the President in Washington for the explicit purpose of advising on what the United States can best do, working with the new committee of the Alliance for Progress and with the governments and peoples of our sister nations, to give more certain and more speedy effect to the principles of the Charter of Punta del Este.

Let me conclude with the closing passage of President Johnson’s message to the Union, six weeks ago. He said:

[ -6 - ]

“John Kennedy was a victim of hate—but he was also a builder of faith—faith in our fellow Americans, whatever their creed or color or station in life; and faith in the future of man, whatever his divisions and differences. This faith was echoed in all parts of the world... I ask you now, in the Congress and in the country, to join with me in expressing and fulfilling that faith, in working for a nation that is free from want and a world that is free from hate—a world of peace and justice, freedom and abundance, for our time and for all time to come.”

[ -7 - ]

## John F. Kennedy – The Man and the President

By Lincoln Gordon, U.S. Ambassador

(Article appeared in the Dec. 1, 1963 – Sunday – edition of Jornal Do Brasil)

It is an ungrateful task to try, still under the first shock of his sudden and tragic disappearance from this earth, to recapture in a few paragraphs something of the essence of John F. Kennedy—the man, the President, the world leader. To do so, however, is perhaps a conscientious obligation. We cannot now seek to anticipate the dispassionate judgments of history, but we can crystallize the impressions formed by intimate contact with this extraordinary man before the deceptions of fading memory cloud or distort those impressions.

The task is made even harder by the fact that Kennedy's work was only well-launched when it was cut off in mid-stream. He was visibly maturing in the Presidency, constantly clarifying and refining his objectives and expanding his capacity to achieve them abroad and at home. Despite stubborn minority resistance, especially on civil liberties, he was growing in domestic popular support. Re-election to a second term was generally expected, and that term gave promise of even greater accomplishment than the first.

Even so, however, what he did in three years was more than some American Presidents accomplished in eight. Above all, he set certain courses from which there can be no turning back—the active search for peace, the reassertion of human freedom as compatible with material welfare and indispensable to spiritual welfare, and the concrete realization of the American ideal of equal rights and opportunities for all.

What were the dominant characteristics of this remarkable personality? In my view, they were the combination in one man of qualities rarely found together in a single human being. Physical vigor and personal grace were matched with a formidable intellect. Idealism was combined with pragmatism. Kennedy was both an intellectual and a politician. He had a consuming curiosity about social forces, historical and contemporary, which he nurtured through massive reading at prodigious speed.

He was guided by the ideals of religious faith and a broad humanist philosophy which place the full realization of human freedom at the top of

[ -1 - ]

his scale of values. He believed passionately in democracy as a continuing peaceful revolution, always seeking new frontiers for the free human spirit. And he believed in the mission of his country as the leader of that revolution, leading not by conquest but by example and persuasion.

To pursue these ideals, he sought rational strategies, respecting the intellectual qualities of science and scholarship, hard facts, objective judgments, and logical inference. At the tactical level, however, he was a skilled politician, acutely aware of the irrational motives and the special interests which play a major part in democratic politics. He understood the need for accommodation and compromise, and the delicate balance between

executive leadership and legislative and popular support in the American political system. He was a skilled campaigner and a master in his relations with the press.

This combination of opposing qualities sometimes distressed his friends of both types. Intellectuals did not always find it easy to accept the compromises of political tactics, while politicians were sometimes loath to respect his dedication to rational strategy.

As a chief, President Kennedy was superb. He was a great man without the vanities or the delusions of grandeur. The pressures on his time were enormous, but he never failed to acquaint himself with the pros and cons of difficult decisions. He read thoroughly, listened well, and cross-examined well. When he reached a conclusion, it was a considered one; it was clear-cut; and his subordinates understood what it was. He had no use for fuzzy minds or for slogans or clichés which obscured the issue at hand. Every encounter with him was a pleasure, since it renewed one's confidence in a President who exercised authority but without arbitrariness. He respected the advice and counsel of his associates but was never led by them. He knew what he wanted, but was quick to recognize the obstacles that might lie in his path. He had the unusual talent of self-criticism, observing himself objectively, recognizing his mistakes, and being quick to learn from them.

[ -2 - ]

His idealism never became confounded with wishful thinking. It rather led him constantly to define problems and to seek workable solutions. At the same time, he was intensely human, relishing life and appreciating its ironies with good humor, devoted to his family, and with a spontaneous concern for the problems and interests of others that made him intensely sympathetic.

All these qualities showed in his exercise of the Presidency. He was acutely conscious of the unique responsibilities of that great office—responsibilities which, as he said last December, can only be fully appreciated by those who have held this lonely position of ultimate decision. But he had an instinctive feeling for the great art of executive leadership, controlling a huge bureaucracy and delegating amply, but always infusing it with a stream of direction. He knew how to distinguish between the important and the unimportant. On the important issues, he did not wait to have them presented to him; he sought them out.

Lincoln Gordon Oral History Transcript – JFK #1  
Name List

**A**

Afonso, Almino, 43A  
Alexander, Robert, 5  
Alves, Osvino, 44A  
Antunes, Leocadio, 7A  
Arinos, Afonso, 45A

**B**

Ball, George W., 9, 15, 36, 53A  
Barnes, William, 3, 4  
Bell, David E., 60, 75  
Benton, William B., 23  
Berle, Adolf A., Jr., 3, 4, 5, 8, 11, 12, 14, 15, 18,  
2A-5A, 56A, 57A  
Bernardes, Carlos Alfredo, 28A  
Betancourt, Rómulo, 57A, 59A, 60A  
Bohan, Merwin, 40  
Bowles, Chester B., 12, 21, 32, 6A, 53A  
Briggs, Ellis O., 17, 19, 20  
Brizola, Lionel, 65, 69, 7A, 9A, 11A, 12A, 21A,  
22A, 44A  
Brochado da Rocha, Francisco de Paula, 22A, 28A,  
33A, 34A  
Bundy, McGeorge, 54  
Bunker, Ellsworth, 15, 6A

**C**

Campos, Roberto de Oliveira, 26, 48, 53, 57, 63,  
70, 81, 4A, 7A, 18A, 26A, 28A, 31A, 43A,  
48A  
Castellanos, Jorge Sol, 9, 24  
Castro, Fidel, 59, 3A  
Clark, Mark W., 40A  
Coerr, Wymberley, 12  
Cooper, Bill, 67

**D**

Dantas, San Tiago, 41-44, 47, 49, 51, 53, 54, 56,  
60-64, 10A, 19A, 20A, 28A, 29A, 42A, 44A-  
47A, 56A  
Dillon, C. Douglas, 7, 9, 24, 25, 26, 29, 32  
Dungan, Ralph A., 15, 53, 35A, 56A, 59A

**E**

Eisenhower, Dwight D., 7

**F**

Framini, Andre, 13A  
Frei, Eduardo Montalva, 54A, 55A  
Frondizi, Arturo, 49, 52, 13A, 14A  
Fulbright, J. William, 34  
Furtado, Celso, 38, 40, 61, 37A

**G**

Galbraith, John Kenneth, 2, 53, 76, 18A  
Gavin, James M., 33  
Goodwin, Richard N., 5, 9, 15, 22, 32, 34, 53, 80,  
81, 55A, 56A, 57A, 58A, 61A  
Gordon, Allison, 22, 32  
Goulart, João, 37, 42, 45-49, 53-58, 60, 62-66, 68,  
69, 70, 7A-14A, 16A-22A, 24A-49A, 51A-54A  
Gouthier, Hugo, 47A  
Gudin, Eugenio, 18A  
Guevara, Che, 28, 29

**H**

Harriman, William Averell, 75, 50A, 53A  
Herrera, Felipe, 9, 24  
Humphrey, Hubert H., 1, 1A

**J**

Johnson, Lyndon B., 82, 16A

**K**

Kennedy, Edward M., 10A, 60A  
Kennedy, John F., 1, 2, 4-16, 19-23, 30-36, 38, 40,  
41, 42, 44-49, 52-59, 62, 64, 65, 67, 69-74, 76-  
83, 2A, 5A, 6A, 10A, 11A, 13A-18A, 22A,  
23A, 24A, 28A, 32A-39A, 47A-55A, 59A,  
60A, 61A  
Kennedy, Robert F., 31A, 32A, 36A, 38A-44A  
Khrushchev, Nikita Sergeyeovich, 58, 59  
Kruel, Amaury, 19A  
Kubitschek de Oliveira, Juscelino, 6, 7, 3A, 8A,  
21A, 46A

**L**

Labouisse, Henry R., 54A  
Lacerda, Carlos, 68  
Leddy, John M., 10, 24, 25, 26

Lima, Hermes, 28A  
Lincoln, Abraham, 5A  
Lins, Evandro, 44A, 49A  
Lleras Camargo, Alberto, 18, 19, 57A  
Lodge, Henry Cabot, 5A

## M

Mann, Thomas Clifton, 12, 15A  
Mariani, Clemente, 26, 7A  
Marinho, Penna, 26A, 29A  
Martin, Edwin M., 8, 26, 53, 75, 15A, 39A, 52A,  
53A, 54A, 59A, 61A  
McCone, John A., 53  
Millikan, Max F., 2, 10  
Morales Carrion, Arturo, 5  
Moreira Salles, Walter, 42, 43, 44, 4A, 10A  
Morse, Wayne L., 34  
Moscoso, Teodoro, 5, 44, 45, 8A, 56A, 59A  
Moura Andrade, Auro, 33A  
Muñoz Marin, Luis, 4, 57A  
Musich, Arnaldo, 6A

## N

Nasser, Gamal Abdel, 5A  
Nehemkis, Peter, 4  
Nehru, Jawaharlal, 5A  
Neves, Tancredo, 37, 42, 57, 45A  
Norstad, Lauris, 22

## O

Onassis, Jacqueline B. Kennedy, 78, 79, 35A

## P

Peron, Juan, 13A  
Pinto, Carvalho, 65, 50A  
Prado Ugarteche, Manuel, 50, 52  
Prebisch, Raúl, 9, 24, 27, 28, 6A

## Q

Quadros, Jânio da Silva, 17, 18, 20, 24, 25, 31, 37,  
41, 42, 43, 46, 3A, 4A, 5A, 7A, 45A  
Quigg, Philip, 70

## R

Riani, Clodsmith, 12A  
Roosevelt, Franklin D., 72, 73  
Rosenstein-Rodan, Paul, 5  
Rostow, Walt Whitman, 3, 10, 54  
Rusk, Dean, 8, 12, 15, 21, 32, 35, 41, 49, 75, 39A

## S

Salinger, Pierre E.G., 34A, 35A  
Schlesinger, Arthur M., Jr., 2, 53, 72, 56A, 58A  
Schmidt, Augusto Frederico, 8A  
Smith, Alfred E., 79  
Sorensen, Theodore C., 8  
Spaeth, Carl B., 14  
Stevenson, Adlai E., 17-20, 22, 23, 24, 30, 77, 5A,  
6A  
Szulc, Tad, 38

## T

Tito, Marshal, 5A  
Truman, Harry S., 75

## V

Vargas, Getulio Dornelles, 69

## W

Walters, Vernon A., 23A-27A, 29A, 40A  
Whitaker, Arthur Preston, 5  
Williams, G. Mennen, 12  
Woodward, Robert Forbes, 12, 52A