

## Interview with Terence A. Todman

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

AMBASSADOR TERENCE A. TODMAN

Interviewed by: Michael Krenn

Initial interview date: June 13, 1995

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This is an interview being conducted with Ambassador Terence A. Todman. The interview is being conducted by Michael Krenn. The date is June 13, 1995, and the interview is being held in Mr. Todman's residence in Tampa, FL.

*Q: Ambassador Todman, let's start out with some of your background: where you were born,, your parents, education and so forth. If you could give us sort of a thumbnail sketch of your background prior to your service in the State Department.*

TODMAN: Sure. I was born in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands in 1926; that goes back quite a bit now. My mother worked as a laundress and as a house maid. My father was a grocery clerk, general groceries and also worked occasionally as a stevedore. St. Thomas was a large shipping port and so we had ships of all the nation coming in there. This gave a certain cosmopolitan sense to growing up in the islands. Right from boyhood I was accustomed to the idea of people of different nationalities being around. Tourism was just then getting started, but it was mostly ships that were coming in there for coal. St. Thomas was a coaling station. And, so, we had the exposure to that: goods and peoples from other countries.

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Growing up was the usual thing. I started out early in kindergarten and learned to read very early, so that by the time that I got to the other grades I was doing pretty well. I had a very strong religious aspect to my upbringing also. In fact, the kindergarten I went to was run by a minister, so I got, as well as the education in reading, writing and arithmetic, a lot about the Bible and about Christianity as a whole. I was very, very fortunate in high school to be exposed to a teacher, J. Antonia Jarvis, who had a very international sense, a view of the world. And so we found ourselves doing studies on different countries, obviously at a high school level, but nevertheless you got exposed to the fact that there were other places, other people, other things happening. So, with the movement of people in and out and with that kind of intellectual academic preparation, it made for a consciousness of a world outside and of the need to deal with other people.

I graduated from Charlotte Amalia High School, second in the class, salutatorian, and went on from there to the Polytechnic Institute of Puerto Rico in San German. There was no university in the Virgin Islands at that time, so if you wanted to get a higher education you had to go away. So, I went to the Polytechnic Institute. Interestingly enough, that was being run by the Presbyterians, so I got a very heavy dose of the Christian side of things. As I recall, we had chapel three days a week, plus compulsory on Sundays. You had to take a course in Old Testament, a full semester, and a full semester of New Testament, and then one elective. I took Comparative religions. There again, living with another set of people, although I'd been exposed to Hispanics, from the large numbers of Puerto Ricans and Dominicans in St. Thomas, nevertheless, here I was living in the midst of a different group. So again, there was an exposure to a totally different culture and set of people.

And then while at the University I got "greetings" from "Uncle Sam," who asked me to come and serve. So, I was drafted. I went into the Army and served a couple of years in Puerto Rico and decided to take the Army Officers' Exam. My commanding officer led me to believe that if he could be an officer then surely I could be one. And so I took the Exam, and I passed, and I went to the Army Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia. And after

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that then I went to Aberdeen Proving Ground, the Ordnance School, and specialized in ordnance, and then served in Japan. I think that it's the experience in Japan that probably led to what I did afterwards. I learned to speak Japanese, and was responsible for a small district. We were supervising the first elections ever held in Japan, which were for school boards and encouraging people to vote, telling them what it was all about, telling them they had a right to do this. But, going around and living among the Japanese and spending a lot of time with them, I was appalled at the strange, false ideas that they had of Americans, totally removed from reality. And then back on the base, dealing with my fellow Americans, who didn't go around didn't know much about the Japanese, it was amazing to get all sorts of erroneous, totally ridiculous views of what the Japanese were like. And I found myself serving as very much of a bridge between the Japanese and the Americans, just explaining, trying to correct misconceptions from one side to the other. It became very obvious to me that there was a great need for that kind of a thing to be done. And I think that's where the idea of the Foreign Service was really born.

Well, in the Army, after I had completed four years, I was offered the opportunity to go to Japanese language school in Monterey, provided I would agree to serve two years after the completion of the school, at least two years more. The school was two years, and I had to agree to serve two years more, I did not want to make the Army a career. I had already served four years by that time, that would have been eight guaranteed, and then you go automatically for twenty. And so I said no thanks, and I was allowed to leave the service. I was discharged. I suppose it's the most fortunate thing that happened to me, because the Korean War broke out shortly after I left. And my unit in Japan was picked up and sent in to go fill the breach. And they became cannon fodder. I met with a couple of my fellow officers later, and just about every other person that I asked for had been killed in Korea. We had about a fifty percent loss from my unit. So, I just missed that.

But when I got out of the Army it was a question then of getting to work, and so I went back to the university, the Polytechnic Institute of Puerto Rico, and finished, got my bachelors degree, summa cum laude. And went on from there to graduate school in public

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administration, because I was still thinking of public service. I was not quite sure on the diplomatic side.

*Q: And that was at Syracuse?*

TODMAN: At Syracuse, yes, Maxwell School. After I got a degree from there, I passed the Federal Entry Exam and got some very good offers. The OMB, the Bureau of the Budget, the Office of Personnel Management, the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the State Department. And the State Department was sort of what I had been thinking about, so once I got that opportunity I entered the State Department. And then the following year, I passed the Foreign Service Examination, but I had already started working by that time. So, that's how it all started.

*Q: And that would have been?*

TODMAN: 1952.

*Q: And then the following year you took the Foreign Service Exam.*

TODMAN: Yes, but I started working before that, based on the Federal level entry exam, because that was an exam given for all the Federal government.

*Q: I read in one of the brief biographical sketches of yourself that you did some government work in the Virgin Islands.*

TODMAN: Yes, during the summertime. I was assistant to the Director of Personnel, during the summer while I was still in the University.

*Q: Was that before or...?*

TODMAN: That was a little before, because that was while I was at the university in Puerto Rico. That was before the Maxwell School.

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*Q: In terms of the State Department, did you in 1952, 1953, did you know at that time, with a certainty that this is what I want my career to be?*

TODMAN: Yes, yes. That's why I selected that out of four offers. And I took an enormous amount of flak from the Director of the Office of Indian Affairs, because he was very upset. And he said that with all the problems we have here in the United States, he couldn't understand why I would want to be going to work on international affairs, dealing with foreigners, instead of helping to do something about American problems. He was very, very serious about it.

Getting into the State Department is something that, I think it's worth saying a word about, because although I had passed the exams and I was told that I was in, the day that I reported for work, the Chief of Personnel said, "He's was very sorry but State couldn't hire me." When I asked, "What was he talking about? I had turned down everything to come to do this and I had been told that I was accepted. Now here I an reporting for work and you tell me this. What do you mean?" He said, "Well, we reviewed your record and we found that you're not the kind of person we can use. We need in the U.S. Foreign Service people who are one hundred percent identifiable as Americans. And we note from you record that in reviewing it again that your accent is not such that you would be readily and immediately identified as American. And so, we don't really think we could have you in the Foreign Service." And I asked, "Well, what the hell am I supposed to do now?" And he said, "Well, because of the commitments we had made, we'll give you the opportunity to go and speak to the head of the office to which we were going to assign you . And if he will take you, then we will not object." This was my first day in the State Department. I go over for the interview and, God bless him, William Witman said, "Look, I have a lot of work to do in this office. I can't afford to have anyone here who isn't going to be producing to meet what I require," And I said, "I think very highly of myself. And if you didn't have work for me to do I wouldn't want to be in your office," And he said, "OK, you've got a job. Let's see how it works out." I remember one of the chief contenders for the job, Charlie Naas, who was sort

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of waiting in the wings, because, you know, this was it. But Bill said, "Fine." And he took me on and we worked together. This was in the Office of South Asian Affairs, handling India, Ceylon and Nepal. I became the assistant desk officer for India. And interestingly enough, it was Bill, later, when he was named ambassador to Togo, who called up and asked if I would come and be his Deputy Chief of Mission. This allowed me to then get into that very exclusive class of people who get a chance to run missions. But, it all came from this first thing, when, very frankly, I walked in there, ready to go to work, and I was told, "We're terribly sorry, but we only can take one hundred percent identifiable Americans. And with that accent of yours, you don't pass muster." So, that was my introduction to the State Department.

*Q: Did you have any trepidation about entering on a State Department career? I mean, in 1952 there were very few black Americans in the department and at that time there were a number of articles in magazines talking about the limited career opportunities for black Americans in the State Department. Was that any cause for concern?*

TODMAN: There were only two in Washington. Clinton Knox, who was over in INR doing research on Europe, was the only person there, in the State Department proper. We had a few people overseas, but there was no one else there. But I come from the Virgin Islands, where people move according to their worth. And it never occurred to me that I wouldn't be able to move along. I learned a heck of lot in the early period. I met a Quaker, Bainbridge Davis, who, learning very quickly of my background in Spanish, and my fluency (I really was fluent in Spanish, in fact, I scored better on the test in Spanish than I did in English), tried to get me into the Latin American Bureau as an assistant desk officer. And the answer was, "Don't even dream of it." And, there was absolutely no reason why it didn't make all the sense in the world. But, there was not a prayer of doing that. The only thing they had blacks doing then was serving as messengers and secretaries. So, it was starting out in rather difficult circumstances. I remember people coming to my office for meetings, and they'd come and say, "We're here to see Mr. Todman." And I'd say, "Well, I'm Mr. Todman, come on in." And it was, "You've got to be kidding!" It took then a little

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while, several people, to accept the fact that I could be the person responsible for some activities. It was a different world.

*Q: Now being assigned to India and that area, was that, did you have any familiarity with that area prior to this particular job?*

TODMAN: No, but that didn't matter. I'd read about India. I told you that my interest from high school was in learning about different countries. We knew people who came from practically all the countries, because they came by the Virgin Islands. I didn't know anything special about India. The Foreign Service in those days didn't expect area specialization before making an assignment. Later, people started doing that. But for the longest time, you were just assigned and you were expected to learn it while you were there. And it's one of the things that, knowing it, led to an enormous amount of irritation on my part, when later I traveled to Eastern Europe, I was then ambassador to Guinea, and I noticed that we were having a hard time getting anyone to believe that we believed in equal opportunity for our multiracial society. We were putting out a lot of information, which no one paid any attention to. And on my return to Washington I told the then Director General that it seemed to me that if we assigned a couple of officers to positions in these embassies, public affairs officer, assistant political officer, whatever, that their very presence there, as black Americans in official positions, would tell the story far better than all the junk we were putting out. And he said, "You know, that sounds very good. I have a friend who has a son who's just entering, (I think it was Harvard, one of the Ivy League universities,) and I will suggest that his son specialize in Eastern European studies, so that when he is finished we can assign him, properly prepared, to one of the Eastern European countries." I said, "What damned nonsense. You pick up people every day who have just entered the Service, you send them for a quick introductory course, and out they go. Why is it that for a black American he has to go specialize in Eastern European studies before he can get an assignment?" The Foreign Service had never done that. We started later. In fact, much of the specialization was done while in the service. If people showed somehow an aptitude for a particular area or language, then they would be allowed to go and do the

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additional specialization. But there was never any question of your needing to be familiar with an area before you were given an assignment. You were expected to be able to learn quickly on the job. So, my job to Indian Affairs didn't come as anything that bothered me.

*Q: During your early years in the State Department, your record indicated a lot of work with the United Nations.*

TODMAN: Yes.

*Q: How did that come about?*

TODMAN: Well I guess about a year and a half after I entered State, the United Nations had a program of taking interns from all of the countries, and we were allowed to compete for that. I competed and was selected by the State Department as the U.S. nominee for an intern program. I accepted very happily and went up there and spent some time on the Secretariat, working primarily with Fourth Committee issues: trusteeship and non-self-governing territories. But I learned from the inside how the UN worked because I was on the Secretariat. In one of the more logical moves made by the State Department, after I completed my internship I was assigned to the United Nations Bureau. That led then to a very long period of activity on UN affairs, a couple of years, and to my making a major difference, because a colleague and I proposed a way to get the colonial powers to comply with their obligations. For the trust territories, the metropolitan powers had undertaken a sacred trust to bring them to self-government or independence. One of the things that struck me very much was that we got a lot of talk about how terrible the people were or how unprepared, but no details of any programs being undertaken to prepare them, just a sense of, "It'll take a long time, but we're working on it." And the idea occurred, well look, if these people were forced to establish some targets that were measurable, two, three, four years, what can we do in this period, not what are we going to do in thirty years, but two, three, four, then you would have something against which to measure their performance in carrying out their sacred trust. And I was able to get that sold to, first the bureau and



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then the Department of State and the U.S. government. And once the U.S. backed it, we got the UN to adopt it. It was intermediate targets and dates. "What are you going to do within which time?" And once that was adopted, we would ask them to say, "In four years what are you going to do in education?" Then at the end of the first year, we'd say, "Good. On this four year plan, how much have you accomplished? How many schools have been opened? How many people have been trained, how many have entered?" In the second year, "Are you halfway there or how are you doing in regard to your four years?" This allowed us to keep pressure on for performance which had not been there before. And I'm convinced that it forced the metropolitan powers to move ahead and hastened the time of independence for the former trust territories.

And that came about in my second assignment. I was brand new to the whole thing. I remember one incident with the head of the office, Ben Gehrig. I used to present so many objections to things they were doing, going along with the colonial powers, that they sent out a few things without my having seen them. I went in and saw him and said, "Ben, we don't work that way. When these things go out we say that they have been cleared by the office. We have the right to dissent. And I insist that if you're going to say here is office clearance, then you're going to need to put, with Todman dissenting. We've got a job to help bring about independence for these countries, we have a job to get them on their feet and not to go along with what the colonial buddies want." And he said, "Young man, when you were born, I had already written a book about this subject." And I said, "Ben, when are you going to write another book?" I thought it was the end of my career. But it just so happened he pulled out his drawer and showed me a manuscript and said, "As a matter of fact, I'm working on one now." So, we talked about his new book and the kind of thrust that would be given. He had been present at the creation of the United Nations and was a man who knew and believed in it. But the policy of the United States at that time was to follow very, very closely the wishes of the colonial powers.

One of the problems I had later, in Africa particularly, was that the Department expected all of us in the field to check with the former metropole before taking any action of making

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any statements on our own. If you were in a former French ruled country, then find out what France says before you say or do anything. If British, then check with them first. And I kept insisting that the United States was the world's leading power and we were not there to follow anyone. Instead, we should establish an independent American position which we would then discuss with them. And we should make accommodations to the degree we could so that there wasn't any breach among us. You know, get a concerted position, but at least go in having decided what it is the United States wants to do. And this was a rather revolutionary thing, but it worked. It made a difference in terms of the way the United States was seen in those countries: not as a follower of the French or the British, the two major former colonial powers, but as a country that stood for something, represented something. The result of that was that we had people coming and speaking to us about what was happening. In many of the embassies, we were as well informed, if not better, than the former metropole. I know during my time in Togo, the French ambassador used to ask me what's going on, because the Togolese confided in me since they knew there was a strong, independent position adopted. They didn't have to worry that there was some maneuver going on around their backs. These were the kinds of things where I know a difference was made in American foreign policy and in the shape of events as they occurred.

*Q: During your time there working in the UN, just based on you perceptions, were racial problems here in the United States of real interest to these other countries? Did it ever interfere with the work? For example, some historians have argued that during this period that you're talking about often the colonial, the metropolitan powers would come back and say, "Put your own house in order before you talk about how we're treating our people."*

TODMAN: That happened often. The United States was not openly attacked very much. But the British and the French often made such comments privately and the Belgians very often. Also, there was, and there continues to be, a major split between the haves and the have nots, the north and the south. And that split was there. And having a minority American there made a lot of difference, because we had access to information that

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wouldn't have been shared otherwise. It comes down in the final analysis, however, to the ability of the person. Others recognize that the power is in Washington and they are interested in getting access to that and getting it to work in their favor and not just in having a nice buddy relationship that doesn't produce anything. So, sometimes you got that separation in the approaches. If you could combine them, then you had an enormous amount of power. But the tensions were there right from the beginning and there was a feeling that the majority should be able to do things. But the majority were all the small countries which didn't have anything. Our determination throughout was to resist getting caught in the middle.

*Q: Since you were an identifiable presence there in the U.S. delegation were you ever approached by black American groups in the United States, NAACP and so forth, with issues that they wanted to get before the United Nations?*

TODMAN: No, they took very little interest in it, at least as far as the issues that I dealt with. Those were the issues that primarily touched Africa because those were all Fourth Committee items: non-self-governing territories and trust territories. There was an occasional show of interest on some particular thing and there was some attention paid to heads of delegations, Nkrumah got some attention and Julius Nyerere did, you know, some of the stars of the dependent world. But I never got a sense that black American organizations or individuals paid a great deal of attention to it. It was a marginal factor.

*Q: Well, after you years at the UN, you got your first overseas assignment and that was in New Delhi. Was that a surprising appointment for you?*

TODMAN: No, that seemed to make sense.

*Q: Right, with your earlier work.*

TODMAN: Because I had spent two years working on it. I had written instructions. I had read all of the things coming in. I had met all of the people I had attended all of

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the embassy functions. I knew the people from the embassy, at least I had a speaking acquaintance with the place. So that seemed an absolute natural, and to me it was the most reasonable thing in the world to do.

*Q: Sure. you were political officer there.*

TODMAN: Right. Political/labor.

*Q: What kind of duties did you normally have during your time there?*

TODMAN: Well, it was both political and labor. I did reporting on the political parties. So, I was supposed to go out and meet leaders of some of the parties, go to Parliament for discussions. I learned Hindustani, which became a big advantage because I could go and report back without waiting for the translations and so on. I was supposed to meet with the labor leaders, attend labor conferences, go to party congresses, basically keep in touch. And we were assigned, there were three or four of us, I guess, we were assigned parties to follow, and you were supposed to get to know the leaders of those parties: what they were planning, what they were thinking, and to give some sense of how this might impinge on the activities of the government and the effect on the United States. In the labor field I did some editing of the materials; we got lots of information from the Department of Labor and from the AFL-CIO. We used to put out a bulletin, on which I did the primary editing, and I went around and met a lot of the labor leaders and found out what issues they were following. One of the fascinating things was that as escort officer for visitors, one of the visitors I escorted was Martin Luther King when he came to India on his pilgrimage. That was during the days of Nehru, I knew a lot of the old Gandhi people. Indira was a little girl. It was a long time ago. It was at the time when the Congress Party was still with the old leaders operating. And it was fun getting to know some of these people. I also got to know the newspaper people and the intellectuals, because that let one see where the ideas come from that political leaders espouse later. It was a fascinating period.

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*Q: India was often mentioned in the black American newspapers and journals here in the United States as being one of the leaders of the Third World, speaking out for peoples of color. Were the Indians themselves very interested in the racial problems that were going on back here in the United States, or was that something very foreign to them?*

TODMAN: As a policy matter it wasn't something that they pushed a great deal. Again, because you're looking at reality, what difference would it make to India? On an individual basis the reaction varied. You had people who came over here and made sure that they were identified as Indians, with the dress and everything else, so that they wouldn't be mistaken for black Americans and be subjected to what black Americans are subjected to. You had others who were very sympathetic. It's quite likely that some of the especially nice treatment we received were reflected efforts to show how totally open they were on the rest of that. I don't make too much of it because, quite frankly, it was too widespread for it to have been something that was planned for that purpose. But again, it was not a major issue.

*Q: While you were in India, were there many other black Americans serving in India, the State Department, USIA, Foreign Service?*

TODMAN: No, no. I'm trying to think if there were any. There may have been somebody in Bombay, but it was...no.

*Q: What were your perceptions, that's a very general question, but just your overall impressions of India? It's obviously a very fascinating nation at that time, with the East-West struggles...*

TODMAN: Very much so, very much so. The tie-in with China and close ties with Moscow; the efforts that Moscow were making to get in. The existence of a real democracy, with people free to say and do as they felt. A country that was determined to have its own place in the world, a place it felt justified by its size and its industrial development. A country

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of greater contrasts than I ever could have imagined, because you had the enormously wealthy people living in splendor that I never could even visualize, and then you had the people who had absolutely nothing. A country of such uneven development; a country that had the most modern technology of the day and was able to produce and was producing and selling everything that any other country could make, including the United States; yet a country that had areas in which you would think that you were back in some other age. They hadn't arrived. The impact of religion, dietary habits, which meant that cows were around, just absolutely amazing. Because of the strong contrasts, you felt the sense of the poverty even greater; greater than I have felt anywhere else. A country with the great obsession against Pakistan; a feeling of fear a feeling of conflict and even in the most reasonable times, when India, the peacemaker, was preaching unilateral disarmament and all of these other noble things, it was prepared to say in the same breath, but "we can't do it because you can't trust those Pakistanis, you never know what they'll do." So, you had this tremendous contrast. A country of an enormously rich culture: the art and the music and the literature, just fantastic. An intellectual ferment that was really a cry for creativity. Also, it was the first time that I had experienced a sense of the difference in the concept of what time is. The Japanese experience didn't prepare me for this. I'm accustomed in the States if you want to get something done, you go out and do it, and it's got to be done now. And in India a sense of, well, maybe it'll take twenty, thirty, forty years, another couple of generations, but we're dealing with things that are four, five hundred years old; we'll get around to it. A sense of old things which, for me, with a desire to get on with the new, provided quite a shock. A country that wasn't well planned, yet one that we had to take fully into account. A very, very hospitable people. The caste system was something that struck one very much. If something fell to the floor, only a person of a certain caste could pick it up. That business, the stratification, was something that made a major impact on one. But the contrast, contrast, contrast.

*Q: You stayed in New Delhi for a couple of years and then you went off for Arabic language training.*

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TODMAN: Yes.

*Q: How did that come about?*

TODMAN: Well, I spoke Hindustani and the State Department asked me to go to Hindi Language training. And I looked to see what the future use of that would be, and I realized that it would be India and then there would be India and then there would be India. And I couldn't see specializing in Hindi. So, I asked to be excused. The Department said fine, you'll be excused from that, but you will go to Arabic language training. They needed people for the hard languages. They decided that since I had been able to learn the spoken language, they knew that I had learned Japanese and since I had learned Hindustani enough to use it for working purposes, they figured that I probably had a facility for languages. And since they need people for the hard languages, and they do need them, they just said, this isn't a question of whether you want it or not, this is your assignment. You will go to Arabic language school. That's how it happened.

*Q: That's an unbelievably difficult language to learn. Did you find it to be more difficult than the others?*

TODMAN: Arabic? No, in fact I reached the 3-3- level in a year and a half, and I was released early. It's a two year program, but you're tested along the way. And 3-3 is what you need for business purposes. Then after a year and a half I tested out repeatedly at 3-3 and going up, so I was allowed to leave. I could read and write really very well. I served as the ambassador's interpreter when I went to Tunisia and I conducted a fair amount of my business in Arabic. I read the Arabic press regularly. I had some fun with the Tunisian communists, because when they would denounce the United States for saying one thing or another, I would take the text in Arabic to them and say, "No, that's not what we said. Here is what we said. Read it." And I would look at this blank on their faces, because many of the educated people could not read and write in Arabic. They spoke it, obviously it was their language; but they couldn't read it and write it. They were educated in French. They

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spoke Arabic. Then after I enjoyed this blank stare for a while, I'd read it to them. That gained me respect in dealing with them, because it said, okay, this is the level that we're dealing on now. And it made a big difference.

Well, for Arabic, there are a couple of big problems. The first one was the gutturals; learning to make sound from down in the throat. And very frankly I got a sore throat the first couple of months just practicing the aughs and uhs and hamzas. And then the other thing was reading from right to left, because, for us, you're going the wrong way. But you learn after a while. I used to have problems at night after you've been all day in class going right to left, and all of a sudden you have to reverse direction and your eyes didn't want to read. It was very difficult getting this. But the language is so beautifully constructed. Really, it's very logically constructed. Once you learn the roots of the words and you learn how the thing is put together, from there on it's acquiring vocabulary. And it's not like English. English is extremely difficult. I've been exposed to it because I've known people teaching English as a foreign language and you think of some of the things which make it a very, very difficult language, both pronunciation and conjugation. In Arabic it is not. In Arabic, for example, k-t-b, ktb, is "to write". Kitaab is a book. You know, you're going to have a short vowel and then a long for the singular of something. Kutub, books. Makhtub, it is written, and so on, a place of writing. Anything having to do with books will be there, or writing, with k-t-b. So you recognize that and you know right away the area in which you're dealing. And it goes on. And the present, the past tense, the future those are all very well defined. So, what you do is learn a whole lot of roots and a basic pattern of conjugation and from there you're home free. The vowels aren't written and so you have to learn that; only the consonants are, so you have to absorb that. But, you know, it worked out well; it worked out very well. I left there in a year and a half. I was going to be assigned to Baghdad and I rode the Orient Express from Latakia in Syria down to Baghdad and spoke Arabic, spoke to people going down. Fortunately when I returned from Baghdad I found that the assignment had been changed from Baghdad to Tunis, which was great, because Baghdad at the time was an inferno.



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*Q: I came across a number of State Department documents, all the way from the 1940s, all the way, really, up into the 1960s talking about where the State Department could and could not send black Americans to serve, because of the country's practices and so forth. One of the areas that they seemed very tense about, was sending black Americans to Arabic nations. Did you find any problem?*

TODMAN: Absolutely not! I am prepared to say that that business about not being able to send blacks was purely concocted within the State Department; it was made out of whole cloth. It was a total lie. I never found in any of the places that I went to that there was any question of any resentment or anything. The only question that people ever had, and you would get this as they got to talk to you, you would feel some doubt: "Does this person have the influence with his own country, to be able to get for us what we need?" But as far as color, as far as any of those other things were concerned—zero. The problem has been, and is, in the United States of America. The only opposition that I ever found, anywhere, has been from Americans. I found it in Costa Rica: Americans, only Americans. In Spain: Americans, only Americans. In the Arab world? Not a hint, absolutely not a hint of it. And the Arab world would be the last place. You go through the Arab world and how many blacks do you find? And you find them doing everything. You find them in positions of importance, in their own country and they're all over. So, this was story concocted by Americans to keep from doing these things. It's damned nonsense.

*Q: Well, that certainly goes along with what I've heard from fellow ambassadors. That all of these that were sort of set aside as "Can't send blacks there can't send blacks there..."*

TODMAN: Nonsense, Nonsense! And the business of sending blacks to Africa is one of the worst. Because, again, the African countries are looking for the same thing any other country is: what influence does this guy have? And when you're up on the ambassadorial level, they want to know about that. Many people assume that the ambassador can pick up the phone and talk to the president and get something done. And it's one of the reasons, quite frankly, why in many places a political appointee is much preferred. Because they

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assume if this guy isn't career, yet the president picked and sent him here, he must be a buddy. And if anything happens he can... "Hey, Prez," and it's done. That's what a country is looking for. They're looking for a channel of direct communication and a person of influence. So, that's the only thing and that has nothing to do with color. And I think, frankly, that the career people are at a slight disadvantage in this, in terms of what the countries would like, because of their perception that the instrument of influence would be more a political than a career. But that's the only place where it exists. And the business about racial preference, absolutely not!

*Q: In Tunisia, you had the same job title. Were your duties any different in Tunis?*

TODMAN: Quite, because it was smaller and I was then at a higher level. Similar, obviously, but I dealt with and covered a great deal more. And I got into the business of negotiating, as well. I was the only person in labor affairs; I was head of labor activities. So I dealt with the leading Tunisian labor leaders. And, from the India experience, I had extremely good ties with the AFL-CIO, with George Meany personally, Irving Brown, who is since passed, I got to know Lane Kirkland. And I dealt with the leadership of the Tunisian labor movement: Habib Ashour, Mohammed Benazzedine, all of these people I saw on a regular basis. I also dealt with the ministries a great deal more directly, because as I said, it was a smaller operation and I was at a higher level. I did a lot for the ambassador there, again because of my knowledge of French and Arabic.

*Q: Who was the ambassador there?*

TODMAN: Russell [Francis H.]. I started out with Walmsley [Walter N.] and went on from Walmsley to Russell. I did a lot of the translating for him. I accompanied him for things where either French or Arabic was needed. I served as his liaison with the aid mission. We had a big aid mission in Tunisia and I served as the ambassador's liaison with that to make sure that the political input was getting in there. I helped to get the Peace corps established; that was the year the Peace Corps first came out and the Peace

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Corps director who came out there did not have any French and hadn't lived abroad. So I became again being the introducer and liaison to help them get going. So it was a fairly responsible position. There was a lot involved in it.

*Q: You mentioned stunning some of the Tunisian communists into silence in reading them the Arabic. Was communism much of a problem in Tunisia when you were there?*

TODMAN: It was there. And obviously they were the ones who were always the most critical. That wasn't enough to change Habib Bourguiba [Tunisian president] from the things he wanted, nothing could change him. He had control of things. But again, he allowed the people to go ahead and say and do their thing. And what we were trying to do obviously, was to combat criticism wherever it was coming from. It wasn't enough to be a serious issue or to risk overturning anything. But it was there and it was important for us that it be dealt with.

*Q: You came into Tunisia, that must have been just after the Kennedy Administration came in.*

TODMAN: Sure, the Peace Corps started at that time.

*Q: You had served all during the Eisenhower years. Did you notice any changes in State Department procedure, the way things were working, the changeover to the Kennedy Administration?*

TODMAN: Yes, I noticed a change. I started with Truman. I noticed the change from Truman to Eisenhower; very dramatic. From Truman, with "the buck stops here," you send me our best recommendation and I'll take responsibility for it, to the Eisenhower group, "If you say it, it's yours and you'd better be prepared to defend yourself." But still there was a certain amount of predictability, I wouldn't say plodding, that's a charged word, but not much innovation. The major thing that one found with Kennedy was a sense of creativity, an excitement, a dynamism, a pushing out, of "let's try this new idea." It was an exciting

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time. For the State Department it was a difficult time, because many of my colleagues in the State Department saw themselves as caretakers of the good of the United States. There was a certain amount of resentment of this impostor, this innovator, coming in with these strange ideas about “let's do this instead of that and let's do it this way.” and the Department did not move as fast as it should have. The result was that for a while the Department was left out. And the White House became a lot more active. The White House staff was doing things and a good part of what the State Department did was to circulate papers around the members of the department. They felt that things should be done in a certain way, they knew best what was in the best interest of the country. And they were going to insist that things be done in that way, that you look at the historical precedents and you respect them. This kind of thing hurt the department in the initial days of the Kennedy Administration.

Another thing that happened was that a generation was passed over, a generation of Foreign Service Officers who had expected that if they did well and didn't get out of line, their turn would come for the top positions, the few ambassadorships that we would get or the DCMships [Deputy Chief of Mission.] It would be their turn to be up there in these positions. And in the Kennedy Administration one felt more a plucking of people who were considered to be the brightest, the best, the most able. And the practice of moving up through the ranks, the whose turn it is, stopped. There was a fair amount of disillusionment and disappointment among the people who had worked hard and thought, “OK, now it's my turn,” only to see somebody else come in and get the Deputy Assistant Secretaryship or the whatever it was. So, for the State Department, my impression was that it was not a very happy time.

*Q: At least publicly, and in some of the actions the State Department took, Secretary Rusk said that one of his priorities was to try and get more black Americans in the State Department. Prior to 1961 it was still being called in many of the black newspapers the “lily white State Department” and so forth. And there were some programs set up by Richard*

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*Fox and others in the State Department to do that. Did you see any of that effort resulting in any changes in the makeup?*

TODMAN: Nothing significant, nothing significant. In fact, it was just after that we had to go out and bring in senior people from USIA and AID because we didn't have anybody at senior levels in the State Department. And the recruiting efforts didn't produce very much. There was no lateral entry, so you weren't bringing in people at the mid levels or above the entry level. The record of the State Department had been horrendous, it's been terrible throughout. There have been spurts at attempts to do things; Dick Fox tried some things, Eddie Williams tried some things, there were a few university programs to try and train some people. Something's better than nothing, but you're always talking about very little.

*Q: Not to break off from the development of your own career here, but why do you think that's been such a consistent problem?*

TODMAN: A couple of reasons. One is American society as such. But another one is the Foreign Service, the Foreign Service Corps. There's a group that develops; it's an in-group. Once you're there, you preserve and protect it, and you want only people like you. Then it's a heck of a lot easier to protect your own position. Also, it's an elite group and one of the ways to insure that you maintain the sense of elitism is to not have too many people in who'll be different. That's part of the elite, too. If you have a different accent, nowadays maybe it's good to have one, but if you don't fit the mold, then the people within the group make sure that you don't get in. And it's done from inside, because these are the people who man all the positions that are responsible for opening it up. You get senior leadership which says, "Yeah, we're committed to change." But the commitment never involves any follow-through of a personal nature. The one case in which I've ever seen that to work was in AID when the man who was head of the Africa Bureau said, "You will bring blacks into this bureau." I wrote about it sometime and made a speech on it, because it was so impressive. He refused to allow anybody else to be appointed. He got, as you always get, the same story, "We can't find anyone qualified who will do it," and then you say, "OK,

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if you can't find anyone then I guess I'll have to yield." But he said, "We won't fill it." And after a while the people who needed to get the work done realized that it was better to go ahead and get someone because he was serious about it. But that was the rare exception, people come in and make a lovely statement, you know, "This is what I believe in, this is what I'm going to do." And I wouldn't question the sincerity of the top people in making those statements. But I will state with absolute certainty, there was never any follow-up to insure that it took place. And if you don't have that follow-up, you have a built-in, protective group that wants its own kind and is able to ensure that it goes that way. And wanting your own kind doesn't imply and is not intended to suggest any animosity towards others. Exclusion often isn't because you hate one group or that you don't want them; it's often because you want some others and that effectively keeps out the other side, without there being any, "I don't want you around." It's not, "I don't want you around." It is, "I want him around and I only have room for one."

*Q: Your next assignment was, I guess, quite a promotion, to Deputy Chief of Mission in Togo. Was that quite a jump in terms of your own duties and so forth at the mission?*

TODMAN: Oh, of course, of course. Because the DCM is the alter ego to the ambassador and is responsible for the entire mission when the ambassador isn't there. He becomes the acting ambassador, if you will. That's not the title used, it's *chargé d'affaires*, but he's acting ambassador. So, you're it. And as I told you, the reason that happened is that the person who hired me in the first place, in the office of South Asian Affairs, William Witman, was named ambassador. And I guess that he considered that the experience with me earlier had been good and so he called and asked if I would come down. I was absolutely delighted, because it was nothing that I could have had any basis for expecting. Going down there as DCM meant that I was responsible for the management of the mission on behalf of the ambassador, in consultation with him, and in his absence, for the totality of United States relations with the country. As it turned out, the ambassador was away quite a bit, so out of three and a half years that I spent there I was in charge for two years. And I was in charge during several attempted coups and during the actual coup that brought

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Gnassingbe Eyadema to power over Nicolas Grunitzky. I had, I guess, about a half a year of being in charge while Witman was still ambassador and then I had a year and a half between ambassadors. This was a fascinating period because I was able to do quite a bit that made a difference in the lives of the Togolese. We had a fund called the Self-Help Fund, under which you were given \$25,000 initially, but it would be increased as you used up that money for different small projects. And I helped in the building of markets, which meant economic growth for areas, putting in of wells, building of clinics, building of schools, fixing up of roads. A number of institutions in Togo were named after me.

*Q: This Self-Help Fund, was that something that was at your discretion? Was this matching funds with the Togolese government?*

TODMAN: Twenty-five thousand dollars was allocated to the ambassador, coming from AID and you made the decisions on what you were going to spend it on. The only restriction was that you couldn't spend more than \$5,000 on any project. So, what we did was to go and see what things they wanted to do, because that money was used only for the foreign exchange content. We'd buy cement, or we'd buy a generator, if they were going to do some things that needed those inputs, They did all the work and usually it was the villagers. We didn't deal with the government ever on this. We dealt with the people, the recipients, the beneficiaries of the project directly. So, if there was some village where they couldn't get their products to market and, paving some roads, not paving, but straightening up, leveling, digging out some stones would make a difference, we would put the money in for getting some pick-axes and other things to work with. You'd help build up a market, cover it, so people would come and bring their goods, come and shop. Lots of wells, lots of schools. Simple, always. And I say \$5,000 maximum, but \$5,000 in foreign currency went very far. We did a lot with that. I started out with \$25,000, I usually ended up with \$100,000. because you'd go right out and get some projects done. And I found a way to bring the Peace Corps volunteers into it. Peace Corps volunteers had no funds, but they knew what was needed. We needed somebody to supervise the utilization of the money, so we'd say, "OK, I'm going to sign here and you have this, and you can watch it." Looking



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for these little windows of opportunity made an enormous amount of difference. I got from a U.S. sporting goods company surplus uniforms, jerseys and surplus footballs, and we helped organize teams so that kids learned cooperation, working together, sportsmanship; still got their exercise. And all it took was to clear some ground up, get some poles and put them down. But it was that kind of thing, in terms of development, that made a big difference.

*Q: You mentioned before that one of the problems you faced from some of the African nations that you served in was the relationship with the former metropolitan representatives. Was that a big problem in Togo?*

TODMAN: It was a problem, but, again, the Togolese accepted the fact that we were a power, that we were dealing independently. They knew that we saw the French and dealt with them. But that was a case where I was far better informed than the French were. They confided in me and they told me what was going on, and I found out a lot of the planning and so on, taking place, of one kind or another. The United States was a power, and there was some resentment of the French, because they always felt that the French might come back in and try and force something down on them. They saw, in some cases, the United States as a counter-weight. Once they came to recognize that we had an independent stand, that made a difference.

*Q: Your time of service in Togo and actually, I guess, the last year or so you were in Tunisia, was the period in which the Johnson administration had come in after the Kennedy assassination. Did you see any real changed in the turnover between those two administrations, in terms of how your own work and how the State Department was operating?*

TODMAN: No, no. The only thing that we saw was the big questioning in Tunisia, which is where I was, about "What kind of country do you people have?" The Kennedy assassination had a major impact on that country. I remember I was hosting a delegation



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from the UAW when they called me from the embassy to tell me about it, to pass the word along. But it was a shock for everyone there. I had Tunisian labor leaders, of course there, with the UAW delegation. The whole reception just ended and the delegation returned immediately to the United States. But the big effect was a question mark in Tunisia about what's wrong with your country; where are you going? This is the kind of thing, you know, that's not supposed to happen. It was quite a while before people came out of their wondering where was the United States, what was it all about, what was happening to us? But as far as the work was concerned there was no noticeable impact at all.

*Q: Your next assignment was back in Washington. You came back from Togo into the Bureau of African Affairs. You had mentioned before that being made DCM, you assume that's really a stepping stone to those higher positions. Did you look upon this as a sort of a disappointment assignment back home?*

TODMAN: I did, because the assignment to Togo, as far as I was concerned, was out of area. I considered myself an Arabist. I had been trained in Arabic. I used the language, I knew it, I had served in the Arab world, I had shown that I could do that very well. My assumption was that on coming back I would be assigned to one of the desks having to do with the Arab world. I could think of nothing that would say, you go to Africa. Except that, there again, there's this fixation; it has been and remains, that if you're black you have to be associated with Africa. I realized that's what had happened. It didn't make any sense to me. Furthermore, it was East Africa, about which I knew nothing except that which came from my time at the United Nations. Because, remember, Tanzania was formerly Tanganyika and Zanzibar, which had been trust territories; Uganda had been a colony and so had Kenya, so I knew about them from that context. But there was no reason to put me in charge of East African Affairs except that I was black; they had to do something. It didn't make any sense, but OK, there you were.

*Q: That didn't last, that lasted about a, less than a year.*

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TODMAN: Yes, just about a year.

*Q: And you got your first ambassadorial appointment and that was to Chad. Was that an out of left field appointment, was that unexpected, or was this something...?*

TODMAN: No, out of left field. As a career officer I knew very well how ambassadorial appointments are made and we know better than to expect ever that we are going to get one. So it had to be out of the blue, totally unexpected. Furthermore, I wasn't at the seniority level or the rest of that which would have led me to expect an ambassadorship. I was, as far as blacks were concerned, very senior, because there weren't any others around. But I was not looking at blacks being assigned separately from non-blacks. I was looking at the service and I didn't see anything at that point that would say that I would go out as ambassador. But I was the senior black and I guess since they decided if they were going to appoint one, there wasn't anybody else to appoint. But I hadn't even been thinking about that. And, it came out of the blue and then to Chad. Well, actually, Joe Palmer, the assistant secretary [for African Affairs], talked to me about it, because he wanted at least to make sure that there weren't certain African posts "reserved." And there had been a ambassador to Upper Volta, Elliott Skinner, and I think he had been the second black to Upper Volta. In any case, he had just been there, and Joe told me flatly that it had been suggested, but he didn't want to give the idea this of being the post, or one of the few, for blacks. So, he said, "What about Chad?" And I said, "Fine, why not?" Again, you're expected, and I think reasonably so, to learn on the job. You learn as much as you can before you begin, but you're expected to learn on the job. Also, it had some tie in to the Arabic which I had, so that seemed fine.

*Q: You got there at, I guess, an interesting time, is the way to say it. Revolt was on, French troops had come in the year before you got there?*

TODMAN: No, actually the whole thing started while I was there. With Libya. And, as a matter of fact, I was in on the beginning of it, because President Francois Tombalbaye,

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called me over and showed me a message he had received from Muammar El Qadhafi, which said, "Throw out the Israelis and I'll give you anything you want. I'll take care of you, all your material needs. Keep them and I'll make you pay for it." Tombalbaye said, "This is insulting and I'm telling him that. That I'm the president of a sovereign country and I reject this kind of thing being written to me." What Tombalbaye had was a very small Israeli embassy, the ambassador and maybe one or two people and there was a small technical assistance mission there, doing reforestation in Chad. I told Tombalbaye, you know, "This is your country, you do what you think is correct. I just thank you for letting me know about it." Tombalbaye did send that message and it was shortly after that, that the Toubous, up in the north, got arms. They had been unruly in any case. Then started the major attacks. Tombalbaye had committed a number of mistakes, because without understanding or trying to understand the culture of those people who wander around in a nomadic life, and leaving them with freedom, he tried to install a system under which they would pay taxes and they would have to show their respect to the central government. The French had been smart enough never to do that. they just left them alone. They got together once a year and had a big feast and pledged loyalty to each other and they were allowed to go on their own the rest of the time. Once Tombalbaye started to collect taxes, people said, "OK, we pay taxes, we get benefits." The only thing, as it turned out, was you pay a dollar in taxes, you want ten dollars in benefits. It can't be done. And then you try to impose certain practices which are fine customs for one set of people, not at all suitable to the other. So, there was some unrest already present, but the Libyans exploited that and provided the arms. That then led to the major outbreak and that's when I got instrumental in encouraging French action. Ambassador Vernon "Dick" Walters, General Walters, was then our military attach# in France. I had known Dick before, and got to know him even better then. And we worked together, because Tombalbaye then needed help very badly, it was something that the United States was not in a position to provide, nor did I see any reason why we should. It was with our encouragement, actually, that the French came in and helped. That was a critical time for the country and for U.S. relations with that country.

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*Q: What were your relations like with the French? Because that's...*

TODMAN: Excellent. In every case, even when we were taking independent positions, the relations were excellent, because the French got to understand that we weren't looking for anything. We weren't looking to be bosses. We just had a policy. We would develop our own positions and talk to them. We weren't going to counter them or try to keep them out. In fact, my approach always was, how can we coordinate our activities so that the country gets the most out of it? And I made several attempts, I did it in Togo and I did it there in Chad, to get them to create aid-donor coordinating committees. It never worked, I would have a hell of a job selling it back in Washington, too, because each country wants to get credit for what it's doing. And somehow the interest doesn't seem to be as sharp, in my mind, on how much does the aided country get? If you would sit down and talk about this, and plan the things in a complementary way, you'd get a lot more. The whole would be greater than the sum of its parts. But it's never done that way, therefore the whole is much less than the sum of its parts, unfortunately. But, we got along very well with the French. And they understood, in this case, that it was going to be their show. So once the decision was taken that they were going to move in, we agreed we'd be supportive in any way we could, but they were going to be the ones running it.

*Q: Let me move from the political to the personal. You had been in Togo and you were now in Chad and those are generally referred to in the State Department as sort of hardship posts. Did you ever have your family with you?*

TODMAN: Oh yeah, everywhere.

*Q: How was that on your family, being in these kinds of areas?*

TODMAN: You know, fascinating. We went to Togo and of course, the kids knew no French. And the only schools available were in French, the French language. And it was tough, because I guess we were hard on them. They had to go to school the first day and

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when they came home after six hours or so at school, they came in to tutoring for two hours, so that they would review what had happened in the class that day and prepare for what was going to happen the next day. They would repeat this, every day. And then on Saturdays, they spent four hours in tutoring, going over the entire week's work and having a sort of preview, broad preview of the next week's work. And they kept up with this as long as they needed to and they all ended up winning the prizes at the end of their school year, including in French and in the other subjects, geography or history or whatever. It paid off handsomely.

*Q: And you had four children at that time?*

TODMAN: Four children, yes. It was tough, but it worked. And then after two years they got bored and they wanted to go away. We had been on a vacation in Switzerland and they thought they'd love to go to school in Switzerland. So we let them all go to Switzerland. So that worked out well for them. In Tunisia it had not been a problem because we had found schools there, but in Togo it was very difficult, but the tutoring took care of it. And once they were in school in Switzerland, then there wasn't any reason to take them out for Chad. So they came to Chad during vacation time. They didn't live with us there, they didn't go to school there. They stayed in school in Switzerland. When we went to Chad they continued in their schools in Switzerland, so that worked out, too. That worked out well.

Chad was interesting. There's one incident that's rather, well, a very important one, one that made a difference along the way. While I was in Chad there was the vote on the representation of China in the United Nations. We were all instructed, all around the world, to try and get our host nations to vote with the United States, to keep mainland China out. I succeeded in getting the Chadians to agree and they voted with us. And then we were told that we could tell the president of the country, that the United States, in appreciation of this, would increase the assistance. We would take money away from countries which had opposed us and we'd increase the assistance to our supporters on critical things,

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so please let us know what it is they wanted to see done, I sent back a message that said, "You know, I think this message would really come a lot better from somebody in the United States, because this would really give impact to it. Just the ambassador going in, he goes in every day, doesn't do anything special. Send somebody out to do this." And, they bought on, and sent out George Bush, who was then our ambassador to the United Nations. So George and Barbara came out and we spent three days together. He delivered the message. There was not much to do, so we played tennis and swam and had a great time, got to know each other very well. Then, he left. Of course, nothing happened. And I would ask every now and then, "When are we going to deliver? The president is asking me, he's ready to move." Finally, on a trip back, I raised it again, and they said, "Well, the president has found out that he can't do everything that he says he wants to do. Once money is allocated you can't just wipe it out from one country and put it on to the next and build it up, so we're not going to be able to do it." So that was where that ended. But the reason that became important is that the time spent with President Bush was extremely helpful later because as he moved on to other things the relationship remained. That was very useful. He became a very good friend.

*Q: After three years in Chad, you moved on to another African nation, Guinea. Was that, did you want to stay in Africa?*

TODMAN: No. Absolutely not. I was told about how really important this assignment was, how difficult it was to deal with Sekou Toure [president of Guinea], and yet how critical Guinea was as the one country that had said no to the French, and how they felt. They said that with what I had been able to accomplish in my other assignments, they felt that I was one of the few people who could go in and do this job well. I had the African experience already, the U.S. really needed me and didn't see anyone else that it could send to do the terribly important job that had to be done. And so I allowed myself to be talked into it. In any case, we can't choose embassies and not everybody gets an ambassadorship anyway. So, I said, OK, I'd take it. David Newsom [Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs] knows this, because after I signed the papers and took the oath

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of office, he said, "Well, if you hadn't taken that we would have given you Tunisia." That's when Talcott Seelye went to Tunisia. Oh...! And, again, what made sense to me was to get back to the Arab world and Tunisia was vacant at that time. And they told me, they admitted, after I said that, if I hadn't taken that I would have gone to Tunisia. But, anyway, OK. I was talked into it. Because of my sense of the importance of service to the country, I said yes. If I had had the faintest inkling that there was another possibility, I absolutely wouldn't have done it. And I've told Dave ever since that he did me in on that. OK, I did go.

*Q: I don't want to skip over the service there, but I guess our time is getting a little short...*

TODMAN: Well, believe me, that Guinea is an important, very important part...

*Q: It turned out to be as significant as they had hinted it would be?*

TODMAN: It was extremely significant.

*Q: Well, let's do spend some time there.*

TODMAN: It is true that Sekou Toure didn't give the ambassador the time of day. He'd call him in, he'd summon him, lecture him and then dismiss him. And he didn't allow any other Americans to come in, no support of the embassy. The anti-Americanism was rampant. They used to go through the streets saying, "Disgorge the neo-imperialist and the neo-colonialists." These were references to the Americans. Sekou Toure had a feeling that we had not helped Guinea at a time when they broke away from France. And because they were hosting the Portuguese Guineans, Amilcar Cabral and company, against the Portuguese, they accepted the word of others that we were working against Guinea, to overthrow Sekou Toure. And this was being fed to him steadily by the communists, the Eastern Europeans. All of the communist countries were represented in Guinea. There was only one other western ambassador, that was the Italian, second being the American. There was a Swiss charg# d'affaires and a Belgian charg# d'expedition des affaires courant. There was no one else there from the West. The British weren't there,



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the French had been thrown out, there was no one. But all of the Eastern Europeans, the Soviets, of course, the Cubans, the Chinese. And it was being piled on us. And there were demonstrations after demonstrations against the United States. They had actually raided the ambassador's house, once. Students had broken in and the wife was there alone, and screamed. Life was miserable. The embassy was in the worst shape, psychologically, that I have ever seen any institution. The personnel used to go to the office and barricade themselves in, basically, and not go home for lunch. They couldn't travel outside of Conakry. They stayed there and ate K-Rations, the Army rations. Or some people would bring a sandwich with them. When I went in, the first thing I did was to order the removal of all the Army rations. The plane that took my household goods in, took out all of the Army rations. I said, "There are Peace corps people all over Africa who need these rations, who can use them. That's it," I said, "This embassy is going to close at twelve, we'll open up at 1:30, 2:00 and I don't want anyone here during the closed hours. You will go home." It was a tough time. But it was breaking that sense of a state of siege. When I went to present my credentials to Sekou Toure, after the ceremony, he sat down and he gave me his lecture. Then he said, "You may leave." And I said, "No, I've got some things I want to tell you." And I talked to him and a conversation developed. We spent three hours conversing during my first meeting with him. And then after that there was an exchange every single time. And he would tell me "You Americans are about to do this or do that." And I would ask, "Where do you get this nonsense from? You show me letters." When he did, I said, "Let's call this number, here. One, this place doesn't exist. Let's dial it now." And gradually and finally, I began just exposing the falsehood of all the things to which he was being subjected. And I said, "They're making you look like a fool. Because you're going out here shouting things that don't make sense. I'll make a deal with you. Anytime you hear anything, day or night, call me, and I pledge to you that I will tell you the truth about it, if I know it. If I don't, I want twenty-four hours and I'll get you an answer. When you have the facts, if you want to go on the air and blast us, do. But, be guided by the facts so that the people accept you as a responsible leader of a major, important country. And he said, "OK." I used to get called at two and three o'clock in the morning, I'd get called on Sunday,



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because he had these reports being fed into him all the time. And I was able every time to answer, or to say, let me check this out and I'll get back to you. I got the support needed from Washington, they got back to me. And gradually confidence was built up and the blasts, the attacks against the Americans stopped. I was allowed to bring people into the country to help out on things that were needed. We were allowed to travel outside of Conakry, with the proper passes. And with all of this happening, from the time that Sekou Toure got to accept my word, and have confidence that I would be telling him the truth, not only did the attacks cease, but other Americans were able to come in, a dialogue was started and gradually Sekou Toure began to support some of the positions the United States was raking, including in the Organization of African States. And Sekou Toure, who had been denouncing, at all times, the neo-imperialists, neo-colonialists, (read: American,) became someone who without saying this is the U.S. position, would take the same stand and defend it. So what we got was a 180 degree shift in the attitude in Guinea, and when you have a Guinea out there with us, it's a major thing. And that was really major.

There was something else that was extremely important, I don't want to dwell on Guinea too much, although it really was a big change. I told you that the Portuguese Guineans were there, the independence movement, the PAIGC [Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde.] I got authorization, quietly, from the State Department, to deal with them. And I got to know Amilcar Cabral well, I also got to know the other leaders and the whole understanding was that nothing was to go public. If anything was ever said, it would be totally denied. But otherwise, we'd maintain contacts. And I remember ordering some USIA films in Portuguese and I got the comment, "You don't even know what language they're speaking in the country you are in, it's French ami." And I said, "No, I want Portuguese, because it's for the Portuguese speaking element of the population." So I got films in Portuguese, and for the PAIGC, at night, in their camps, they were looking at American films, USIS training films and things about the United States. And all of this was going on in contact with the Portuguese Guinea independent movement. And on this I had an enormous run-in with Kissinger, because he was all for the Portuguese. And I was

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sending him messages saying that's a dying thing. When Amilcar Cabral was murdered, I immediately sent his widow a message, saying, "Take some comfort in knowing that the principles for which he fought and died are those that are going to prevail," After I sent it to her, I sent it in to Washington. I could have been fired then, but, what the hell. This thing isn't about that, it's about what you believe in. The consequence of our contacts was when independence came to the Cape Verde Islands and to Guinea Bissau, the United States was able to be the first country in there. Excellent relations right from the start, because there had been this history of cooperation with them, understanding for them during their very difficult period. And this happened in Guinea. So the foundation for the relationship between the United States and at least those elements, Portuguese Guinea and the Cape Verde Islands - Guinea Bissau, were laid during this time in Conakry. And I'm sure Sekou Toure knew that this was going on, so it was something else that undoubtedly helped to convince him, to make him understand that we weren't working against him. That here was a serious country, with a belief in principles which it was founded on. So, it really is important, that's why I felt we couldn't just jump over it.

*Q: No. This was probably the first nation, then, that you worked in, in which there was a large representation from communist-bloc nations.*

TODMAN: Yes, total.

*Q: What kind of working relationship, if any, did you have with those missions?*

TODMAN: I had excellent relation, very good relations with the Hungarians. It was very funny, because the Hungarians, I mean, you could see what was happening there. The Hungarians would say, "Yeah, yeah, yeah," quickly to the Soviets, whatever they wanted. But they went ahead and lived their own lives. The Romanians, very tough inside, but they exercised a certain amount of independence on foreign policy questions. I had good relations with them also. Because since they had such tight control over their own people at home, they felt that they could take the liberty outside to take different stands. The

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Hungarians were pleasant, but they were careful about how far they went. The Romanians were a lot more willing to take stands on international issues that were not necessarily coincident with the stands of the Soviet Union. I developed reasonable relations with the Chinese, after the Ambassador became dean [of the ambassadorial corps.] Because while the Cuban was dean, he didn't clear his message with me. It was a message on behalf of the entire corps. So I arranged with the chief of protocol to give me the opportunity to speak at the ceremony of good wishes to the president. nobody knew what I was going to say. But word for word that after the dean, the Cuban spoke, the American ambassador would speak. So, it was a tense moment. He made his speech, and then, for those who didn't know, there was a shock when the chief of protocol said, "The ambassador of the United States." And I said, "I asked for the word, because I did not receive the courtesy of any advance information of what was going to be said on my behalf and on behalf of my country. But having heard it, I have no reason to take exception and I merely express my own good wishes and my agreement with what was said." Then the Chinese who was going to succeed as dean came over to me and said, "I'm going to be dean next and I want you to know that I'm going to behave as a proper dean and you can expect better relations with us." So, I got that.

But, while I was in Guinea I traveled to all of the Eastern European countries and the Soviet Union, because I wanted to come back with some knowledge of what these places were like. This is when the incident I told you about happened, where I went and saw no blacks in any positions, and when I went back to Washington and had that conversation about assignments and got that ridiculous answer. But, that trip was very helpful, because when I returned from visiting their countries, then I stopped getting all of these blurbs about the glories of their countries. Because they knew that I had gone, I spent a week in each one. I was taken around and I had briefings and visits. And, so it changed the nature of our relationship at that time.

I was able during my time in Guinea, also, to make the opening for the return of the French and then of the British. Because after my relations with Sekou Toure got to be good, then

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I could talk to him about anything, so the way was paved for them to get back into the country. So, it was a very, very, really crucial period and I think it's the country in which I made the major difference in terms of relations with the United States. From one of total hostility, total, including these denunciations constantly and the marches, to the point where this had stopped. Life was very, very difficult. There were no supplies available in the country. Everything that you ate was imported. We had vegetable gardens instead of flower gardens. Fish was rationed, everything was rationed, and you had to be on the list to be able to buy anything. A very, very tough life. Because the French had really treated them brutally. The French took out everything that was French provided. They took out maps and even the building plans, so if anything went wrong they didn't know where to go fix. They ripped out telephones, took pens. Just took everything. They just said, "You said you want to be independent? You wanted to be without us? OK. we take out anything that reminds you of us." It was quite a time of rebuilding and it worked. Sorry that was so long.

*Q: No, that was fascinating. Your first two ambassadorial appointments to Chad, then to Guinea coincided with the Nixon administration and the end of that in 1974.*

TODMAN: Yes.

*Q: What... You read so many books about people who worked in the State Department during that time and their relationship with Kissinger, not very good. What did you think of the Nixon-Kissinger team in terms of foreign policy and your working relationship with them?*

TODMAN: Well, I started out on, I suppose, the wrong foot with Kissinger from my Guinea experience. Because I was pushing for freedom for the African countries and Kissinger was supporting the Portuguese empire, so that was not a very good start. When I came back, when I was getting near the end of that, I made it very clear that I did not wish to go back to Africa, back to any black-ruled country. I said, I have Arabic, I have Spanish, I have French, I have experience and I have to go someplace outside the traditional African

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places. That was not a nice thing to be facing them with either. So, "Well, you don't have enough experience for our large countries, so we don't really quite know what we can do with you." And I said, "Well, you figure it out, but I'm not going to another one of these." And the question was, "Well, when will you be ready to go?" I said, "Anytime. I will go directly from this conversation, if you've got a place for me to go to, or I'll sit in Guinea until you've got a place. Timing is not a factor, so feel free on that." "Where would you like to go?" "I'll go anywhere, except one of the black-ruled countries, Africa or the Caribbean, no. But you pick it, anywhere. I've got the languages I've told you, and if I don't have it for a country, I'll learn it and I will. So, it's up to you." And this was a problem for them. At that time, they couldn't get the man who that they had named for Costa Rica confirmed. It was a young fellow Nixon had brought in and wanted to get him to go down once, and then come back as assistant secretary, whose name escapes me at the moment. But, they couldn't get him confirmed. And the Costa Ricans were starting to complain, because they had been waiting for a long time without an ambassador. Also, [Robert] Vesco had just gone into Costa Rica. So, you've got Vesco who's gone down, they can't get [Stanton D.] Anderson confirmed as the ambassador, you've got the Costa Ricans complaining, you've got this black guy out in Guinea saying that he's got to get out of Africa and not go to the Caribbean. And somebody came up with this really unusual idea of let's kill three birds with one stone, or four, Todman to Costa Rica. It'll serve them right. And you know, we'll get this done. And that's how I got appointed to Costa Rica. And the first meeting with Kissinger, again, with the Foreign Minister was not a very good one. Because, I had read a lot about Costa Rica, I knew about some of the problems they were facing. And Kissinger was saying something in that meeting with Fascio, the Foreign Minister, that I didn't agree with. And I said so. Kissinger was furious: "You see what I've got to deal with?" But, Kissinger came and visited while I was ambassador to Costa Rica, everything went very well. And Kissinger understood I was a professional. And we developed a feeling of, really, mutual respect and liking that made for an excellent working relationship. He knew that I didn't speak without having thought about what it was, that I would stand up for what I believed in, that I was respectful, but that I wasn't a "yes" person. I think he got to like

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that and the result is that Kissinger says that he discovered me and put me up there. And I said, "Yes, thank you very much." It's fine, why not? But we still get along exceedingly well and I know that we have a good feeling about each other. We did have these times where there were things presented, but...

*Q: You say that you were eager to get out of Guinea, anyplace...*

TODMAN: Out of Africa, out of Africa.

*Q: But Costa Rica, when that came up, was that an exciting possibility for you?*

TODMAN: It was getting out of Africa, it wasn't where I was going to. I wasn't looking to go to Costa Rica. What I have insisted all along, and I continue to insist, that Foreign Service Officers, whoever they are, should have the opportunity and the possibility to serve anywhere in the world. I resented, and I still resent, the "ghetto" assignment of blacks to Africa or to Caribbean nations. I resent it. I resented it then and I still do. And the United States still does that. We haven't learned a thing over all these years.

*Q: Right, it's about eighty percent [of black appointments go to Africa or the Caribbean.]*

TODMAN: And it was the old story then about, you know, the Costa Ricans wouldn't like this, wouldn't take this. The only people who ever showed any reserve were the Americans living in Costa Rica. And I could care less, because I was not appointed to them. And the Costa Ricans could not have been nicer. And once they saw, those Americans, the nature, closeness and strength of relations with the Costa Ricans, then they all sort of came around. Because to be in with the ambassador becomes a great thing and I knew that that's what it would be. So they came around and I said, "Well, if I get some time I'll see you." It worked it's way out after a while. But, you know, it wasn't for me, "How exciting, I'm going to Costa Rica." For me, it was, "I am breaking out of this ridiculous mold of being assigned only to black countries." Here I was trained as an Arabist, but they can't send me to an Arab country. Once they got their hooks into me in Africa, "This is it buddy. You

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escaped for a while, but we've got you now." But I was determined that that was going to end. I'm thoroughly delighted that it turned out to be Costa Rica, because I haven't lived with a more wonderful people ever, a nicer people, a great place. And I was there during an exciting time also, because it was a time when the Nicaraguan movement, the Sandinistas, started spilling over the border as the fight with Somoza got to be bigger. And to be in a country that's pure democracy, where elections are a party, where members of the same family belong to different parties, go out and cheer for their parties, come back home and everything is fine. Where, you know, beautiful theater and good concerts and education was very important. A really civilized country, very, very lovely people. It just couldn't have been better. And then on the substance, those issues did come up. So it got to matter, also.

*Q: Yes, there were a couple of major issues. You mentioned the Vesco issue, which is back in the news once again.*

TODMAN: Oh, lord, I had some face-downs with that guy. He was convinced that I was there to get him, and I had on three occasions where we were both in the same place. And one of them was really scary, because he brought out all of his heavy artillery, and I mean heavy artillery: six, seven or eight guards with submachine guns and everything. And then sat there, sort of, "Come get me if you dare." I hadn't any intentions of getting Vesco! I had a couple of scary encounters with him, because he felt, always, that I was trying to catch him someplace I could get my hands on him and pull him out. But that wasn't the point. As a matter of fact, one of the things that happened there was that we were trying to build a case against him, wire fraud, mail fraud was one of the big charges. The Justice Department finally said it was too much, too expensive to try and too much trouble, so to drop the whole thing. This was a real disappointment to me, because it was quite clear, if it's too much money, too much bother, you're not going to pursue it. But you're right, there were several things.



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*Q: Were you given any kinds of directives concerning Vesco? Were you supposed to pressure the Costa Rican government to try and get them to do something about the situation?*

TODMAN: Well, not pressure, but, you know, to make sure that they understood our interest in getting him back, yeah. And actually I had several sort of suggestions, that people might be able to get him on an airplane. No, no, no, we're going to do this properly and legally. And we were never able to. They weren't about to really... the extradition, the expulsion. So, we were never able to do it.

*Q: Continuing on Costa Rica, you mentioned that one of the major problems you had was the spillover from the problems in Nicaragua. What kind of directives were you given in terms of what was going to be the U.S. policy toward all of this, in terms of aiding Costa Rica, or doing something about the situation?*

TODMAN: Protection for the Costa Rican democracy was uppermost. And the fact that Costa Rica has no army, we knew it had no army and could not defend itself against incursions, was a major consideration for us. So, it was a question of making sure that the Costa Ricans were reassured that we wouldn't stand by and see them abused, overrun. But also that the Nicaraguans, particularly Somoza, knew the same thing. Because it was a question of the Sandinistas and the Nicaraguan Army, the combat from that, spilling over. So, it was important that the army understood that so you didn't get into pursuit and consequent fighting on Costa Rican soil, which would be detrimental to Costa Rica.

*Q: Of course, there had been a long history of animosity between Costa Rica and Nicaragua, going years and years and years back. Was that still a real problem when you were there in Costa Rica? Was there this real animosity toward Somoza and his regime in Nicaragua?*



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TODMAN: It was there, but it was somehow influenced by the fact that they didn't like some of the things that the Sandinistas did either. Because the communist connection was very clear to them, and so to go, stand up for that against...,they didn't like either one. I think that what would have normally been the great opposition to what was going on, to the government and its activities, were somewhat attenuated by the negative reaction to the Sandinista communist move. And they sort of got caught midway between these two things.

*Q: What were the Costa Ricans asking for, from the United States? Did they ever ask for any direct military assistance?*

TODMAN: No. They were just concerned should things reach the stage where there was any problem that they would know that they could count on our country. They didn't want anything in, because the hope was that it would be contained. And, they were interested in making sure that we let the Nicaraguans know that we would not, we wouldn't tolerate their causing any major problems for Costa Rica.

*Q: Did you travel much through the Central American area, outside of Costa Rica?*

TODMAN: Very much so. I went to all of the countries.

*Q: Going through the 1940s, 50s and into the 60s, every State Department report about Central America always singled out Costa Rica as such a different country. Could you really distinctly see that as you went through you travels?*

TODMAN: Well, one of the things about Costa Rica that you could see was,... yes you could. The Costa Rican population was very much more educated and this was very, very clear. For example, your agricultural assistance programs, you could send literature out and say, "Do it this way," and you know they'll be able to read it and figure out how to do it. In the other places, you could not do the same thing. The Indian element, the content of the population, is far more pronounced in the other countries than it is in Costa

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Rica. The black element in Costa Rica is down at the Udorna and doesn't participate inside and is a small amount in the, in a couple of the other countries. But I guess that it's the predominance of the Indian that you could feel. But the result of this combination of the culture and homogeneity and more European type population meant that your structure, physical appearance was different and the cultural elements within the country were different. You knew that the opera house, the concert hall was the center of things. The Little Colon theater. And there were schools all over and the children were, they looked better. And they were out there. You got a feeling of a more prosperous, a different approach than you did in the other countries. You could feel it.

*Q: Your service in Costa Rica went to 1977, so that would have been with the election in 1976. What did the Costa Ricans think about the change over from the long Republican rule of Nixon and, of course, Ford, and then with now Carter? What was their feeling?*

TODMAN: I left too soon to get a real feel for this. But I think it was one of great expectation of what was going to come because of the Democrats. A feeling that there would be more understanding, more reaching out, more sympathy.

*Q: While you were there in Costa Rica you received the Superior Honor Award in 1976 from the State Department.*

TODMAN: I don't remember. I really don't remember. They look at something that you've done over a period of time and, you know, at the time it works out. But I honestly don't remember what it was.

*Q: In 1977, with the coming to power of the Carter Administration, you were called back to Washington and made Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, the first black to ever be made head of one of the geographical divisions. Was that quite a surprising job offer for you from the Carter Administration?*

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TODMAN: Is sure as hell was! It certainly was. I couldn't believe it. As a matter of fact, it's rather curious because I got this call from Peter Tarnoff saying that Secretary Vance, the designate, would like me to be Assistant Secretary for Latin American Affairs. I said, "Gee, thanks a lot. I'd like to come up and talk to the Secretary about it." And he said, "Look, there's a lot of pressure to name someone and the Secretary has inquired all around about you and all the reports have been favorable and he wants you to have it. He has a very busy schedule and he wants to announce it right away." And I said, "Well, you know, I'm very flattered by all the he things you've said, and I know a couple of positions the Secretary has held, but I've never met him and I haven't inquired about him and I really would like to meet him before giving an answer on this." He said, "Are you turning down the position?" I said, "No, I'm not turning it down, I'm asking for a meeting so I can decide." He said, "Look, the Secretary's preparing for the hearings. He's terribly busy, there are all kinds of things that have to be done. He really doesn't have any time for a meeting." I said, "Look, I'll meet with him at breakfast, in the middle of the morning, at lunch, in the middle of the afternoon, for a drink at the end of the day, at dinner, any time that he says. I can't believe that he wants me to be his assistant secretary and he doesn't have any time that he can meet with me. Is that what you're telling me?" He said, "Well, I'll have to go back to him." I said, "Please do and then let me know." And then I got back a call saying, "OK, Mr. Vance can see you on such and such a date and, you know, this time." I said, "OK, I'll be there for the meeting."

I went back, and we had a good talk as we both expressed our views about Latin America. What we saw were the challenges, the possibilities, the opportunities, what we had to look out for, kinds of things we had to deal with. And we came to very good agreement on those things. I asked about personnel, he said, "You select your personnel." And about running the place, "You run it, just make sure you keep me informed. Check with me on anything that is really very sensitive." And I said, "Fine. Under these conditions I would love to be assistant secretary if the offer still holds. If the offer still holds, I'd be very happy to do it." And he said, "By all means."

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I say all of this because the consequence was that when I became assistant secretary, whenever I really needed to speak to the Secretary, I could do so directly to him, not to somebody else out there someplace. When I wanted to make a recommendation, I could get it to him and get him to look at it, think about it seriously and talk about it seriously. And this didn't happen with a lot of the other people. In retrospect, I realize now that I was risking blowing a major opportunity. You know, for a black American to be an assistant secretary of state and head a geographic bureau, and I hesitated. But it was important to me to do that. The problem is that there were several groups pressuring for the naming of some people, including the now-Congressman, who was the one-time ambassador to the ILO, a very, very fine fellow, Hispanic-American, Esteban Torres. A wonderful fellow, really great. He was one who was being pushed very much. There were several other people. This was why all those pressures existed, get rid of that and end it. But I didn't go looking for the job and I thought I better do it right. I had at that same time a very flattering offer from Andy Young to be his deputy at the UN, because he knew of my experience at the UN and this fitted perfectly. I told Andy, "Thanks very much, but I prefer to do the other thing, so..."

*Q: Well, what reasons, when you had this talk with the Secretary-designate Vance, what reasons did he give for having selected you?*

TODMAN: None. We didn't talk about why he selected me. We talked about how we viewed Latin America. The issues, the opportunities, the kinds of things that had to be dealt with, the approaches and that's what we talked about. We never talked about why he had selected me. It didn't matter to me. What mattered to me was, are we going to be working on a job and are we going to be doing it together? Are we on the same wavelength for getting something accomplished? And that's all that I wanted to establish. Once I was able to establish that and once I met him and knew that this was a person that I could deal with, you know, that I could relate to, that I could say things, get things back, communicate with, then that took care of it. The "why" didn't matter. It was. "Can

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I sit down and have a conversation with him about issue and know that we're going to be talking about issues and dealing with them?" Because my concern has always been, what can I get done to serve the country? So, really, I didn't mind, I didn't know or ask why did he select me. And if you look at it, my only experience in Latin America had been that one assignment to Costa Rica. Because there was nothing else in my experience that had been Latin America. The Costa Rican assignment, my background from Puerto Rico and my knowledge of Spanish and so on, but that's way back. I had never served in Latin America. So, to be asked to be Assistant Secretary for Latin America, "What's this all about?" Which is why I went through this process of who am I going to be working with? And, is there enough of a coincidence of views to be able to work the issues together. And once that was established, then I didn't have any concerns, because I happen to feel I can do what needs to be done. And I felt that I would be able to do that.

*Q: Well I think that we're getting into too complicated an area for me to even ask another question, so I'll end off now.*

*Q: This is a continuation of an interview with Ambassador Terence Todman. Today is June 27 [1995.] The interview is once again being conducted by Michael Krenn and once again at Ambassador Todman's residence in Tampa. You mentioned that you had a couple of points from your earlier career that you'd like to start our interview off with today. So, why don't we go back and pick up those points and then we'll come back to the point where we left off the last interview.*

TODMAN: Yeah, that sounds like a good idea. The first one concerns actually the arrangement for meals, the possibility for black Americans to be able to eat in the State Department cafeteria. This was in 1957. The State Department had just established a Foreign Service Institute over in, I think it was Rosslyn, Virginia. And the courses, the introductory courses on countries, for people who were going overseas were held there. When I was assigned to go to New Delhi, I therefore had to attend courses over at the Foreign Service Institute. When I got there, I discovered that the only thing they had for

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any meal arrangement was a very small coffee shop where you could basically get some coffee cake and some coffee, tea or whatever. And at lunchtime, all of the white officers went across the street to a regular Virginia restaurant and had their meals. On my first day, when I went to the coffee shop and saw there were no eating facilities, I asked where I could have lunch. They said they were sorry, this was all they had. And I said, "Well, I'm accustomed to a good warm lunch at midday and I'd like to be able to do that, so how can we work that out?" I said I was willing to go into town across the bridge, if that were necessary, but it meant that I couldn't go and get back in time for the class. So we would have had to adjust the class schedule. Or they would have to find some place where all State Department people could eat. They regretted that they were in Virginia, and the laws of Virginia didn't allow blacks and whites to eat together and they had no control over the policies of the restaurant, it was privately owned and run. I said, well, no one forced them to move there. There were other places they could have gone where this would not have been a problem. And this got to be a major issue. It went up to the Under Secretary for Management. They said, people had gone there before I had and no one else had complained, they had just managed to get by on it, they had taken it. I said, that's fine, they took it, but I'm not going to and so we need to work something out. The outcome of this, after a lot of unhappiness on the part of many people, was that the State Department leased a half of the restaurant and a partition was put up. The same kitchen was used, the same waiters, but one half belonged to the State Department, or was leased by it and the other half was a regular private restaurant. And so we were able to go over to the State Department leased part and have lunch there. And you ran into ridiculous situations where one side would get full and then overflow into the other. But basically the State Department recognized that it had to make provisions of an equal nature for all its employees. And eventually, of course, with the changes, then the restaurant gradually became integrated in fact, because people were moving back and forth. As I said, the same kitchen, the same waitresses, and so the matter was resolved. But I was considered a troublemaker, and that was all right. But it was an important change for everyone else who went to the Institute after that, to know that things were being done properly.

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*Q: Well, let me ask sort of a follow up on that. Since you were based in Washington for a while there, did you have any trouble with housing? That was often something I found.*

TODMAN: No, I didn't have any trouble with housing. The trouble we had was with restaurants. I was in Washington, of course, when the restaurants were integrated, when the 1898 law was declared valid. And so I used to make an effort to go to those restaurants. We went through very, very difficult periods when the service would be slow or things would be spilled on you. Of course, prices were very high, but we insisted on going, saving up as much as we could and going to each of the different restaurants at one time or another and putting up with things when we felt we had to, but complaining when we felt we should. There were a number of embarrassing situations before that, where you'd go to a restaurant and you'd be taking foreign visitors and you'd be told, right there, no. And this was all very new for me, because I hadn't been accustomed, having grown up in the Virgin Islands, I was not accustomed to this kind of thing. It was a very difficult period, but at least I never took it quietly. And I did manage to bring about both the changes in restaurants in general, but more importantly to me, the change in the policy of the State Department, of the way it treated its employees. I thought it was very important to get that in, because it made quite a difference.

*Q: I'm glad that you did. That's very significant.*

TODMAN: The other two things I wanted to mention come from the period when I was Director of the Office of East African Affairs, two rather interesting incidents. One was when we were told that Daniel Arap Moi, who was then the Vice-President of Kenya, was coming on a visit. And since I knew that Jomo Kenyatta was unlikely to be visiting, I tried to get Arap Moi received just for a photo opportunity at the White House. I asked the Assistant Secretary of State and he agreed that we should do it. So we sent the appropriate memorandum over there. Henry Kissinger was at that time National Security Advisor and the answer came back, "No, there will not be a meeting." Unfortunately, this was reflective of an attitude towards the African countries and African leaders in general.



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That didn't sound right to me. The Kenyan ambassador, a new one who had just arrived, was going to be presenting his credentials and it occurred to me that maybe I could get Daniel Arap Moi in with the ambassador for a handshake, photo opportunity, that's all, no discussions, no real meeting. And I asked the Chief of Protocol if he would mind if I tried to sneak Daniel Arap Moi in. He said it was the craziest idea that he had ever heard of but if I could pull it off, he wouldn't object. So, I arranged, with a great deal of difficulty, to get Moi up from the TVA, where he was visiting, to Washington, on his way to Akron, Ohio, and to get the Park Police in Washington, D.C. to provide a motorcycle escort for him from the airport up to his ambassador's residence to change and travel in the car, with his ambassador. So, he came, went in the car, went into the White House, was met by the President, had the handshake, and then left.

The day after this occurred I got a call from the Assistant Secretary [for African Affairs,] Joe Palmer, who said that he had just been raked up and down by Henry Kissinger who reminded him that Moi was not to get in to see the President, and he wondered how the hell did he get in and what was he doing there? And Joe said, "Terry, I just wanted you to know that I think you did the right thing." Actually, as it turned out, it was the right thing, because Daniel Arap Moi became the president of Kenya. As far as he was concerned, he didn't know that he had been sneaked in. He didn't know that this wasn't a real meeting and visit. So, he went back feeling wonderful about the excellent treatment he had received in the United States and it obviously conditioned his attitude toward the U.S. and on several things later the fact of his having been in the White House and been received make a difference in the way that he saw us.

The third thing that I'll mention was much shorter, but a very important matter of principle from while I was Director of East African Affairs, during that same period. I noticed that cables were being sent out directly from the Department of Defense to posts in the field without clearance by the State Department. One thing that was established and was practiced very much was that messages had to be cleared and that instructions went from the Secretary of State. And people were continuing to violate this, and a couple of



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messages went out from the Pentagon, instructing the ambassador to do things without ever having been cleared with the State Department. And I sent out a cable one Friday afternoon, referring to one that went out in the morning. I sent one out in the afternoon, saying, "Ignore the instructions. They have not been cleared." And I sent a copy of my cable to the Pentagon. The next Monday morning a four-star general was on the phone raising hell with the Assistant Secretary, saying, "Who the hell is this that is sending out messages countermanding instructions that I have sent to the field?" When the Assistant Secretary called me, I reminded him of our regulations, that nothing goes out unless cleared by the Department, he said, "You're right," and he called back the General and said, "You send them here for clearance in the future. They are not supposed to go and no ambassadors are to follow instructions if they're not cleared." I think, again, this is very important, because one of the things that this country needs, has always needed and needs today is some kind of clear direction for its foreign policy. The President of the United States relies on the Secretary of State and his department to insure that. And when the State Department does not function in that way, then there's no coherence, there's no telling where our foreign policy is, because each agency then decides to do whatever it wishes. What I was doing was taking a stand for a principle that I considered to be fundamental. Obviously when the general was called on it and reminded about this, he had to concede. But this was something that otherwise just would not have happened. I thought it was worth mentioning because there you have a critical point in the establishment and management of United States foreign policy.

*Q: That's good. That's a question that I wanted to ask further on in the interview, especially with your work in Spain and Denmark, working with these different agencies and departments. Well, when we left off last time, you were, I think, just expressing first, great surprise at your appointment to Assistant Secretary for Latin American Affairs, but you had also...our interview ended with you being very determined to sit down with Secretary-designate Vance and talk over the problems and policies that you would be part of if you joined in, signed on to be Assistant Secretary. I wonder if you could maybe summarize*

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*basically what came up in that conversation; what kinds of policies and problems, because by the time you became Assistant secretary of State, U.S.-Latin American relations had not been real good for a while. So, what did you two talk about and see as the basic problems and policies you wanted to follow in Latin America.*

TODMAN: It would be hard now, at this stage, to come up with details or specifics. But what we did was go down the continent and then go through country by country. One of the things that was very clearly established was that we were not talking about "Latin America" as some sort of a general, broad entity. There was a recognition of a great deal of difference from one country to another, from one sort of regional area to another. And it was certainly clearly established that there would be efforts to make sure that we were recognizing these differences among the countries and treating with each country on its own. Looking at the issues that were important to each of the countries. We established clearly that there would be an exchange of equals. The United States was not going to be dictating policy to Latin America, that we'd be doing a lot of listening, trying to fashion policy toward the countries in the light of the conversations that occurred with these countries. An attempt to give them responsibility for being involved in formulating it and therefore, for being responsible to make sure that the policies agreed upon were followed. Not that there were things that they could therefore ignore, as they wished, along the way. But we went down each country and looked at the issues that were current at the time and tried to figure out what we would do with those. It was a time of really great tension in the Southern Cone, for example; between Argentina and Brazil, Argentina and Chile, it was a very difficult time. It was time of great human rights abuses because you had the "dirty wars" going on in different places. In Uruguay there were very, very serious problems. We had the problem of Central America, which was at that time a spillover from the Nicaragua-Somoza activities, but then problems in the neighboring countries as well. And of course, the issue of Cuba, which was standard, which we knew we would have to deal with. There was a great deal to talk about at that time.

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*Q: One of the issues that is so associated with the Carter Administration is the issue of human rights, and you mentioned the human rights abuses going on in Latin America. Of course, it was a policy that came under severe criticism at the time afterwards. What did you think of that new accent on human rights by the Carter Administration?*

TODMAN: It was a difference in nuance and approach. I kept insisting that showing value for human rights, the human person, for the well being of the individual, had to be an integral part of every single thing we did. That you shouldn't separate human rights from other activities, as if it was something that could be dealt with by itself, but you made sure that it was incorporated into everything that you did. That it was part of a value system. That was extremely important for me. The other thing was to insure that we did not add to the suffering of poor, suffering people as a way of getting to the despicable leaders. This was critical. Because there were many people who felt that if the leader of a certain country were not behaving properly then the thing that you did was to punish the entire country were not behaving properly then the thing that you did was to punish the entire country. And we had one thoroughly outrageous thing that occurred, I think it was in Paraguay, where people were dying from water-borne diseases. There was a project being financed by one of the international financial institutions. It was quite clear that the project was bona fide, that it was going for water purification, and the position taken by some people in the administration was that we must oppose doing this project. Of course, the decision of the United States on projects and IFFIES [International Financial Institutions] was critical. And I said, "For God's sake, these people are dying of water-borne diseases now. This is something that's going to at least save some of their lives. How can we oppose this?" And the basis for the opposition was, this was to make sure that General Alfredo Stroessner didn't get any credit. So, it's OK to go ahead and see hundreds more Paraguayans killed, in order to be sure that Stroessner doesn't get any credit. Well, Stroessner wasn't going to get credit anyway; but even if he did, for God's sake, if it's credit for saving people's lives, then get it. And this was one of the issues, because there were some people there who wanted to save the world and this was it' let's

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go out and do that. I suppose the third thing is that I was and am results oriented, and I believe in pressing, screaming, cajoling, doing what is necessary to obtain the results that you establish, that you want to get. And sometimes this is done by getting up on a public platform; sometimes it's done by going in and quietly twisting somebody's arms. The methods vary depending on the case. There were a number of people around who believed that the answer to everything was a great deal of shouting. And it seemed to me that the consideration was what was going to make them feel good? "I have gone out and shouted about it. What happens to the individuals after, that's not important. I've gone and shouted. So, I've done a great deal." And, quite frankly, I resented that, because my concern was the suffering people and wanted to see things done that would ease the suffering. And I recognized that sometimes this is a whisper in the ear, sometimes it's a poke with your finger, it's different things. And I don't think that it's possible to say that the same kind of approach would work in every situation. And I found that in many cases there were people who were not willing to be nuanced in dealing with the issues.

*Q: During your tenure as Assistant Secretary you visited just about every Latin American nation, didn't you?*

TODMAN: Yes, I did.

*Q: What was the reception to this new emphasis on human rights in those nations? Were they confused by it; were they concerned with it?*

TODMAN: They were concerned by it, but they were concerned by the fact that people were screaming at them, rather than sitting down and pressing things with them. And in every case, I brought up particular cases on every visit that were concerning us, that we wanted something done about, to try and get acceptance of visits by human rights commissions, which have that as their agenda. And I was able to get that in many case. I remember in Uruguay, for example there was one time that I just went straight out in the public square, answered some questions, and said the military has no business running

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the country. You know, Uruguay has been known for a long time for its democracy and Uruguay should come back to being a democratic nation. And the military should find a way to get out of this position as soon as possible. It's rather interesting, because some of these things I had forgotten. Then I saw the president of Uruguay at the inauguration of President Menem, and he came over and thanked me for what I had done; he said, this was the thing that gave hope to the people that the change would occur and that the United States was ready to stand up to see those changes occur. That kind of thing warms the heart, because you know that it made a difference. I remember in Chile discussing the matter very seriously with the chief justice of the supreme court, and he telling me that under the law they couldn't do anything else. They were following their law which came from the last century. I said, I think it's time for you to start looking at your laws and making laws that are applicable to today's situation. So, in each case I met with the people concerned. I met with political leaders, I met with the judicial authorities, and I met, of course, with the major government leaders. And it was always to try to move the issue further. It's obvious, to me, you're talking about humanity. And there's no country that can say that the way it treats or mistreats its own people is its own business, because there's something concerning the human being, the human person, that goes way beyond any frontiers.

*Q: Discussing the human rights policy and the Latin American reception to it.*

*Overall...because that's a policy that has been heavily, heavily criticized, as I said, both at the time and afterwards, for being unrealistic, harmful to allies and so forth. In your opinion, since you were right there on top of it at the first instance how successful do you think it was in Latin America?*

TODMAN: I think it met with moderate success. I think the fact that some pressure was being exerted helped to bring about changes that would not have occurred otherwise. I think we would have been able to do a lot more if it had been handled properly. This policy started as a way of getting at the Soviet Union, and then it was just picked up and transferred like that, whole cloth, to Latin America. And obviously it wasn't the same thing

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and should never have been that. But I think that if there were not pressure from the United States for changes, some of the changes very likely would not have occurred. But we got into several things for example in El Salvador, we railed at the government for the way that the police were mistreating people. And the president of El Salvador said, "Fine, give me some training for the police so that they'll know how to behave properly." And the human rights person who had made this complaint and promised that assistance would be given, didn't know that AID regulations prohibited providing and police training. And so the president of El Salvador delighted in raising the question periodically, saying, "When am I going to get this training for my police so they'll know how to behave properly?" Because he found out that we couldn't do it. And his whole point was, "Here, you're telling me, you're criticizing what I'm doing, and yet you're in no position to do anything to help me to change it and do it right." And there were some of these inconsistencies in the way we looked at things. Because people, some people attacked it as if it were isolated. And of course, it is not. The question, also, of when you raise it, made some difference. Because you have a whole range of relations with a country. And if there are things that you want to get them to do, in another area, at another time, you time when you're going to make an approach. You don't go in and blast on this and then turn around at the end of that and say, now will you do this? And I think in some cases we did not achieve other objectives because we did not establish a proper balance, or the proper approach, or the proper priority in dealing with some of the issues. But, on the whole, I'd say that it had moderate success, because in a number of cases if we had not been pressing things may not have moved, probably would not have moved, as far or as fast as they did.

*Q: One of the consistent problems that was sort of passed over to the Carter Administration, of course, was the issue of Cuba. There seemed to be a different approach toward Cuba during the Carter Administration and you were assistant secretary during some of those changes. What kind of different approach did the Carter Administration take toward Cuba, or was it that much different?*

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TODMAN: It was a very different approach. We decided right at the very beginning of the administration that we would seek to reach some negotiated understanding with Cuba and that the administration was going to do this and not allow itself to be controlled by the Cuban community in the United States. Therefore, we made the arrangements for establishing the contacts without consulting with anyone. And once the contacts were established then we let them know. I was then authorized to enter into negotiations with Cuba. Cuba wanted to get the right to fish in U.S. waters. We were also faced during this time, as you recall, with numerous incidents at sea over presumed violations of maritime boundary. People were always being arrested and released; a lot of problems. And it seemed worthwhile to negotiate and establish a maritime boundary with Cuba and a fisheries agreement. We held our first meetings in New York. I remember that day very well. A very bleak, cold day. And I saw the Cuban delegation coming down with real fear in their faces. They're coming up, you know, as supplicants to the Yankees. And I walked down the hall to greet the delegation; greeted them in Spanish and apologized for the miserable, cold New York weather, and assured them that the warmth of our meeting and our reception would try and compensate in some way for this. Ah...relief on their faces and smiles, and we went to the delegation meetings. And I knew things about the head of the Cuban delegation. He had an ulcer, so we would break periodically so he could go and have something. We had milk in there. Also, I was able to hold discussions with him on the side in Spanish. Whenever we got into very tight, tense situations at the table, and I would call a break and go over and talk to him, alone, and examine what the parameters were and where we could find some agreement, and then go back and sit down and work it out. We came pretty close to final agreement; in fact we could have concluded the agreement on the text of both treaties during the New York meetings. But the Cubans decided that they wanted to have meetings in Havana. And so they dragged their feet for the last few days, and came in the day before the end and said, "We can't finish it now. We didn't get our instructions. But Fidel would like you to come down, leading a delegation, so we can conclude the negotiations." And this brought about, I guess about the only near breach that I had in the State Department, because I recommended, then, to the Secretary that I



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be authorized to go, lead the delegation, and conclude the negotiations. And he checked with the White House, and the answer that came back was that over there, Brzezinski felt that the Cubans would make mincemeat of me. This would be a senior U.S. official going down to Havana at the mercy of these devils; they would tear us apart. And so I was told I couldn't go; I wouldn't be authorized to go. To have it in some third country, that would be fine. And I said, "Look, it's common diplomatic practice for negotiations to be held alternately in each other's country, unless you're doing it in all in a third country. But you don't do one round in your own country and then switch to a third country. And if we really believe in the equality of the nations, equality of treatment that we're talking about, then we do this. So, first there's the principle—do we go or don't we? Second, is, do I lead the delegation? And if you don't think that I'm able to represent the United States and take care of our interests in dealing with Castro, then I shouldn't be assistant secretary of state. You need somebody else here who can do the job, if you don't think I can do that. Because that has to be part of what's done. Then I pointed out that if I were in Cuba there would be many advantages, many things I could do there, including getting some prisoners freed, getting the interest section established, getting back our property, that I couldn't do outside the country. And so it made sense for me to go. So, the Secretary agreed to go back to the President with this and came back and said that I could go. So, I did go down to Havana in late-April and it's rather interesting. Because, again, we're getting near the end of April and the foot-dragging started again, because they obviously wanted to have me there for May 1st, a great celebration in all the communist countries. And I said, "Look, my plane is coming back to get me here on the last day of April at eight o'clock at night, and I'm leaving on that plane. If we have signed agreements, fine. Then we can go ahead on the ratification and implementations. If we don't, we'll have another round back in the United States at some point. We'll have to look for dates to have another round. But I leave on the 30th." Well, they hemmed and hawed. This was on the 28th that they had suggested postponing. They said Fidel wanted to meet with me, but he didn't have any time until the 2nd to deal with these things. I said, "Well, that's very nice." But I knew that they very badly wanted to get the fisheries agreement and so I figured that they



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weren't going to want to wait too very much longer to do that. And so we concluded the agreement, the two agreements. They both were signed; they both were ratified by our respective parliaments. They've been in effect. And subsequent to that there have been no more troubles over the international waters and where the boundaries are. Those things don't happen anymore. The Cubans fully respect American law. So our people go aboard their vessels, inspect, insure that things are being complied with, and that relationship is working very well.

We got back all the American property, the residence and the embassy. We established interest sections which allowed Americans to go in and actually look after American affairs which were being handled before by the Swiss. We had no Americans in the country. So we are informed directly by our own people of the situation there. They had people always in New York; we had no one at all in Cuba. We were able to do that so that we got relations going. We got a number of Americans released, some people with dual-nationality, as part of the process. So, it became a major breakthrough. And we were then beginning to move towards a further major step in normalization which revolved around the withdrawal of the Cuban troops from Africa. And the Cubans agreed in principle that they could do so, but it would have to be on a gradual basis. The position taken in the administration was that it had to be all at once. And, of course, Cuba could not absorb all of those people, either in terms of the economy or the political situation, or anything else. There was no way that this was going to happen. And we insisted that failing that, we would not continue the normalization process. And so, by the time I left, a chill developed in the relation that just remained that way. But, enormous progress had been made and things were going in the right direction and there were a number of other things that we had envisioned which could have worked out. I looked very much at the idea of petroleum products they were getting from the Soviet Union. There's no reason that Cuba should get petroleum products from the Soviet Union, with all that's available in this hemisphere. So, my intention was to seek an arrangement where you would have a petroleum swap so that you would decrease the dependence of Cuba on the Soviet Union, begin weaning

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it away and typing it more into the Americas system. This was something that had been already thought out. And we were thinking of how to go about putting this into effect. But everything died, basically, on the issue of timing, the speed of the withdrawal from Africa. And it died on the decision that it had to be all now. But the basic policy earlier was one of engagement and one of getting Cuba back into the system, because of the certainty that once it came back into the system, democracy would prevail; because the Communist system was corrupt and it couldn't last. And if people were free to move, to do things, to have contacts, to get reading materials, to see people, it would undermine the system that's there now. And the things that happened couldn't be blamed exclusively on the United States. It made an enormous amount of sense, and was moving well. But it was stopped in the last part of the administration, and, of course, this was something easy to continue when the administrations changed.

*Q: One of the other—and there were so many large issues connected with Latin America during that time—another one of the big issues, and probably the best known, were the Panama Canal treaties. What particular role, if any; did you have in that process?*

TODMAN: A great deal. I was a person to whom the Panamanians turned privately, repeatedly, whenever any issues appeared to be getting bogged down. Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker, of course, ran the negotiations; Sol Linowitz worked with him, so in that area—and I did not sit in the negotiations. However, repeatedly the Panamanian negotiators came to see me on issues. And I remember Gabriel Lewis, who was the ambassador, was in very frequently. And there was a lot of this talking to make sure that things would keep moving. And when the treaty was finally approved, signed, and it came time for ratification, we counted the Senate votes and we knew that we didn't have the votes to get ratified. And I developed, together with Peter Johnson, who is now running an organization for the Caribbean countries, a plan for making sure that the American people got to know what this was all about. Not propaganda, but explaining what it was. And we took a map of the United States, looked at where the votes were and where they weren't, who was on the fence, who was against unalterable, who was in favor and we

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decided to go out and hit all the people who were on the fence. You know, just thank you to those who were in favor, and look at all the fence-sitter. And we organized a massive campaign of public information, public speaking. And I went around myself and spoke in many places around the country, to groups, gave interviews to newspapers, on radios, took people's questions—"What is this thing all about"—to try to insure that the American people knew what it was we were doing. And the votes changed. We got enough votes changed and we got the treaty ratified. So I was in on the formative stage, with a great deal of conversations that were not critical within the formal negotiating session. And I know that getting some of these things changed was critical, because I could then go and talk about them. And then I was involved again finally at the end, just before ratification.

*Q: Well, another hot spot at that time was Nicaragua, and of course, you'd had experience in Central America...*

TODMAN: Yes, yes. Nicaragua is the one place that I suppose it's one of the regrets, one of the very few I have, in that I didn't succeed in doing what I wanted to. By working closely with the then-Nicaraguan ambassador to Costa Rica, who I knew very well while I was ambassador to Costa Rica, we got arrangements and got agreement from Somoza that he would be willing to step down from power if he could leave in a normal, proper manner. He had had a heart attack and was recuperating from this and could use that as a reason for stepping down. We were looking for what to do with Tachito, the son, someplace that he could go for many, many years, so that the Somoza family would not have the grip on the country. The president of the assembly would become president just for the purposes of holding elections. Somoza was on board with this. Unfortunately, in the Department of State, the position was taken that Somoza had to be punished for his treatment of the Nicaraguan people. He could not be allowed to leave in a dignified manner. And I lost that battle. And once the word got back to Somoza that he was not going to be allowed to leave in a dignified manner, in a normal manner, by resignation, he decided that he would fight to the finish. The result was for us all to suffer, which is the thousands of death, the hundreds of millions of dollars of destruction, the suffering and the wreckage of American

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foreign policy, and all because of a sense of vengeance, that Somoza had to be made to pay for the harm he had done the Nicaraguan people. The United States could not be a party, could not possibly agree, to allowing him to resign and leave. Once that happened, the fighting went on and on and on.

One thing that became very evident was that the Sandinistas, who were communists, were much better organized and were certain to be able to take over the groupings. I knew the various people involved, but I also know first-hand, having witnessed communist ability at organizing, and knew something about the help they were getting. But, again, there was a reluctance within the Department to come out clearly against the Sandinistas and to able them for what they were. And I guess that's where the final break came. Because I made a speech in which I went right ahead and said, you can't allow these communists to take over. Because the members of this coalition have nothing in common, except the understandable hatred of Somoza. But once they're able to get rid of Somoza, the communists, the Sandinistas are gonna take over and then the country is gonna be in a bigger mess. And this was not pleasing to my bosses in the State Department, not Secretary Vance personally, but others. And I was told that they didn't appreciate my making those statements. It was obvious that over an issue like that, the disagreement was just too great and that, added to the disagreements on the matter of applying the human rights policy, made for a combination that was no longer very good. There was no longer any possibility of keeping the Bureau and Latin American policy straight or going very properly. Q: That seems like a terribly short-sighted look at what was happening. Do you think that the biggest problem was that these other people didn't understand, really, the power of the Sandinistas; they thought that once Somoza was gone it would be just on to another dictator or something?

TODMAN: There was a certain amount of naivete there. There was a certain amount of New Left thinking that was there. And there was no willingness to come out and say things too harsh against the others. So, I think it was a combination of these things, actually.

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*Q: You seem to be indicating that that was pretty much the issue, in combination with some of these others, that pretty much effectively ended your tenure as assistant secretary.*

TODMAN: Yes. I decided at that time that it really was not worth trying to go along with this, because the cards were stacked very much to go the other way. And I did not see the interest of the United States being served. I know that we were very, very badly hurt in Nicaragua over the decision on the Somoza resignation. And then you add to that the approach of not wanting to be plain about the Sandinistas, which was leading us down a path of destruction. So when the opportunity came to get an ambassadorship and leave, I jumped at it immediately. Because there wasn't much point in staying. It was quite clear that the lines that I was taking was not the one most people wished to take, and there was no point in staying on.

*Q: Just a personal question about that: did you think that your career would be damaged by this incident?*

TODMAN: No. Because I think that if that thing ever got to a big hearing, I would be vindicated. But the interesting thing is that I've never thought of what's going to happen to my career. I never thought about what job I wanted next. I've always thought about what is best, in my mind, for the United States. And I've always decided that that was the thing I was going to do, and then let the chips fall where they may. I haven't been able to calculate what was going to be the career consequence of anything I've done. I've never done it throughout my career. What's going to be the career consequences has never been a concern of mine. I've looked at what does this mean for the interests of the United States. If it's there, I do it; if it's not there, I oppose it. Simple as that.

*Q: Let's go back for a moment to an issue that we've talked about before, Your appointment as assistant secretary of state coincided with Carter's appointment of ten other black Americans to ambassadorial posts in the first few months of his administration.*

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*Did you see a real change in the Carter administration in terms of trying to promote and better use black Americans in the State Department? Or was this, once again, one of those short-lived sort of things?*

TODMAN: No, Carter was serious about this. He was very, very serious about this. The appointments he made were significant appointments to important posts, and he broke a lot of the mold of this ghetto; you know, everybody had to go to Africa. And there was a very sincere desire there to make a difference, and to utilize black Americans.

*Q: Cyrus Vance seemed to be very, very committed to that, too.*

TODMAN: Cy Vance was a...he's an absolutely wonderful person. And I must say that I've never had a better, more profitable, more enjoyable working relationship with anyone than I had with Vance. It was really a terrific relationship with a person who's a real gentleman, with a sense of commitment and a determination to follow through on the things that he said, and, you know, he believed in. He wouldn't just say things. He acted on them. I remember we used to have staff meetings. We had a program which was the low-cost housing program. AID ran this. The savings and loan associations of the United States absolutely loved it, because in most countries of the world you can't get long-term mortgages as you can in the United States. So, we went with this program, which was offering mortgages of up to twenty years; wonderful. But, you looked at the cost of the mortgage to the poor person who was getting it, the mortgagee paid the cost of the money to the S&Ls; they paid an interest to their own government for assuming this responsibility; an interest to the U.S. government for assuming its responsibility; and the cost of the running of the program. So this program was run with no cost to anyone except the mortgagee. And you're giving them loans, usually very small loans, for houses, which wouldn't be standing by the time they were going to finish paying the mortgage. And you know it sounded really so wonderful, that we were out there doing these things. And we had a staff meeting one day, with the Secretary of State and the AID director was there, we were gearing up to go to Congress to defend this program and seek a continuation and

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an increase in it. I said, "Look, I'm not saying you shouldn't have this program. But please, let's cut out the nonsense of this being a great big give-away from the United States to these poor people in the other countries. Because everybody—the S & Ls are making the same amount of money they would make if they were lending here, plus all of the guarantees that must be paid for by the foreign government, the U.S. government, and the employment costs of running the program are being paid by that same mortgagee. So, let's not go with pretenses. And Cy hadn't known about this or thought about it, and this led to a big discussion. I remember, the AID chief coming to me afterwards and saying, "Look if you have anything to say against our programs, come and say them to me outside, don't say them in meetings with the Secretary of State." I said, "I don't have any personal complaint about you. I'm interested in fairness; I'm interested in justice; I'm interested in integrity. And I want to make sure that the United States does the right thing. It doesn't matter whether it's you or who, so get off my back." But Vance would listen. Vance, he's a great guy.

*Q: You mentioned that an ambassadorial post came open, and that was Spain.*

TODMAN: Yes.

*Q: That was, going to there, that was certainly the largest embassy you had worked in, to that point.*

TODMAN: Yes.

*Q: One of the questions that I wanted to get back to was, you had mentioned early on your relations with the military and so forth. Here was a large embassy where you were dealing with representatives from the military, you had your CIA representatives there, and so forth. What kind of job for and ambassador is it to keep all of those people, as you said, going in the same direction?*



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TODMAN: It's a tough job; it's a very, very difficult job. Fortunately, from the time of Kennedy, there is the ambassador's letter, which gives the ambassador, and it is put there in writing, and is sent to all the agency heads, that the ambassador is the president's representative, responsible for everything except military under a separate command. Not military in the embassy, but if there is a command established, then the commanding general of that has his responsibilities. But everybody else, including any military there, all are under the ambassador. That's specific from the president. And if an ambassador is determined that he's going to make it stick, he does. And you just tell them all, "Look read this," the day you go in, and you let them know right from the beginning, this is the way it's going to work; policy is set by me. Nothing is going to go out from here that is not consistent with what is established. You're not going to go through any back-channels. And one of the things that I did which made an enormous amount of difference was to meet with the secretary of every agency that had any representation in the country, and to meet with the assistant secretary in charge of the area, and to pledge to them that I was working for them and that they could count on me, and that if there was anything they wanted in the country, please come to me directly, in addition to whatever they're doing with their own people. And they could count on me to be fully supportive. If I had any differences I would be open and above-board in letting them know about it. But I wanted to make sure that they understood that. And since their representatives in the field knew that I knew their bosses, this made it very easy, because they didn't know their own bosses, quite often. You know, they knew of the office director. But if they knew that I knew their assistant secretary and secretary, I had seen them and see them regularly when I go back, then it's a totally different thing. And the chairman of the joint chiefs I knew and sat down with, both before going out and on several visits back. But you have to make that effort; you have to inform yourself very, very well, on all of the issues affecting all of the agencies. Because if you don't know the agencies and you don't care about them, you can't say I want it this way. Therefore, it requires an enormous amount of work. But if you do that work and let them know, then there is not problem.



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*Q: Once again, like so many of your assignments, you got to this nation at a very interesting time; a tumultuous time, but an interesting time. It was only a couple of years after Franco's death that you got there. Spain was in the middle of sort of a tumultuous push toward democracy. And I think there were at least three Spanish government while you were there?*

TODMAN: Yes, yes.

*Q: Was it difficult to establish a working relationship with that kind of situation going on, the turmoil and tumult and this constant changing of governments?*

TODMAN: Well, you had to work at it. So you do. And the role of His Majesty, also. But again, this was critical, really critical at this time. But you know, once you establish that you consider them as a proper, equal partner in activities, once you deal with people on the basis of equality, not trying to put over anything on them, not backing away from anything, you develop a friendly, open, and honest interchange. Then it gets to be very easy to deal. No hidden agendas, no tricks that they're going to discover later that you lied to them. That sort of relationship went well. You didn't attempt to interfere in their policies. You're straightforward about what the United States is doing, what we want, what we can respond to, and you let them run their own country. But you keep in touch with everything that's going on, and you keep in touch with all the various groups. And by doing that, by keeping in touch with all the groups, then you get to know what's happening and you can reach out and get things done. If you establish that you don't have a preference for one group or another and that you represent the United States and you're going to work with those who are there, that you believe in certain things that are fundamental—then you're able to keep going. And I didn't find any particular problems. While Adolpho Suarez was in I met with the Socialists. When he was changed, for their own internal reasons, to Calvo Sotelo, again we continued working with them. And we kept in close touch with all sides. So that when Felipe Gonzalez came in we knew them already, we had dealt with them before. There's a recognition that politicians have to say things for political purposes, and

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you hold them to it when it seems important to do so or helpful, but at other times you're understanding of things they're saying or doing. And this worked very well.

One of the things that was so critical in Spain was the negotiation of the bases agreement, which was very difficult, frankly. Difficult because many of my colleagues from the Pentagon did not appreciate that the world had changed, one, from the Franco times in Spain, and two, from the overall situation after the war, where we dictated terms and got them accepted. The fact that they didn't appreciate it, meant that they were trying to insist on things that the Spaniards were absolutely never going to tolerate and it came close to the breakdown of the negotiations, several times. But the important thing is that we did negotiate, we did reach an agreement during the time of Calvo Sotelo. However, before the treaty could be ratified, the Socialists came to power. The Socialists signed and accepted the exact same treaty, with no changes, except the cosmetics of taking some paragraphs from within the body of the treaty and putting them up front. For example, to say that either side can denounce this treaty and have its termination within 90 days, or whatever it was. It was right there in the body, but no one would have seen it. You bring it up front—"This is what we made them do." No nuclear weapons will be based on Spanish soil, again in the body of the treaty. But you bring it up front, and you can say, "We made sure of that," and several things like that, that were done. But, basically we had negotiated an agreement, which was fair, which was beneficial to both sides, and when they came to power and sat down and looked at it, they didn't need the rhetoric of denunciation anymore, because the opposition government was gone, and they had to deal with it. On NATO, they, were talking about no NATO. We started joint exercises with them, using NATO doctrine, then the Italians did some, other people did some, always using NATO doctrine, so that by the time it came to a decision on NATO, what was the big issue? We'd been doing NATO things all along. But they couldn't come out before and say that. And this was the critical thing.

I think the most difficult task I had was introducing the Reagan administration to the Gonzalez administration because—I was sent there by Carter but stayed over with

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Reagan—there was a feeling of mistrust, from both sides, without knowing each other. The Socialists thinking, this right-wing Republican is coming in, and the Republicans thinking of these left-wing Socialists out there. Early on, very early on, the Secretary of State, Shultz, decided to come visit, and I sent back a briefing book on things to raise, things to expect, answers to give, the whole thing. And the trip was on. He went to Paris before coming to Madrid, and I went over to Paris to meet him to fly back with him. And while he was at dinner that evening, I took his briefing book and read it in total disbelief, because back in Washington they had changed everything a hundred and eighty degrees. Things I told him not to say, they put in for him to say. What he should say were out. What to expect was changed, how to respond was changed. And I sat up that night in total disbelief and made notes, not marginal notes, notes to myself, and the next day when we got on the plane I said, “Mr. Secretary, you've been set up for total disaster by what they've put in your book.” He said, show me what. I sat down and talked to him about it. And he said, “OK, I'll go back to what you had recommended, but if this doesn't work, it's your neck.” And I said, “Of course. That's what it's all about. If I mislead you, I shouldn't be around. But if you follow what it is that I suggest you do...” So he switched and followed what I suggested. The trip went beautifully, and at the end he said, “You know, this was one of the nicest trips I've had.” I said, “Of course. I know these people, that's why I told you what I did.” But it's the kind of thing you meet with. And actually, frankly, that was more difficult than dealing with the transitions within the Spanish government.

I suppose there was one thing that came out that created a certain amount of misgiving, when there was the Tejerazzo, the attempted coup, which the King had to work so very hard to abort. And he, personally, made the difference. Secretary of State Haig was caught coming out of meeting with someone back in Washington, and was asked what did he think of what was happening in Spain. He had not had any briefing. He had been in this meeting all the time. So he comes down from the meeting, no opportunity to be briefed, and he answers, “Well, what's happening in Spain, that's their affair.” And this was read back that he was supporting the military and that presumably was because I

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was supporting the military and we didn't care about democracy, we just cared about who we could deal with that would do things that we wanted. And it really was one of these things. Al, instead of saying, "No comment," just made this statement which was his no comment. But it gave rise to a good period of misunderstanding, which, of course, was attributed to presumed information that I had sent. Although the fact is that I had worked very closely with the King, and had given him all of the possible assurances of support to keep democracy going. We really worked extremely well on this. And there wasn't the faintest doubt about our total support for democracy and against the attempted coup. But that one little comment, caught at the wrong moment, created some doubts. But eventually we were able to nip that down.

There's one thing, again, I should go back to Latin America and talk about, because it's critical. That's the nuclear problem, particularly between Argentina and Brazil, both of whom were coming moving very, very well on it with all of this animosity there. And Brazil was getting some assistance from Germany. So the very first thing that the administration did was to have the deputy secretary go over to Germany and say, "There will be no more of this going to Brazil." No consultations with Brazil, no conversations at all, nothing. And, of course, they learned about it. And as Assistant Secretary I had to go down on my first visit with this as the background. Furthermore there had been a memorandum of understanding under which there were ministerial consultations with the previous administration and Brazil. And there was no decision made on this by the incoming Carter Administration. So when I landed in Brazil it was one of the most difficult, tensest situations I have ever walked into. Because their feeling was that here was a representative of an administration which had no regard for Brazil, no respect for Brazil. They had gone ahead and unilaterally done what they did, cut out things, without ever so much as a word of consultation with them. No indications on the high level consultations. And so it got off to a fairly rocky start. Again, it's one of these things. I took the job with the full intention of having this kind of exchange, but it was torpedoed exactly right off. So it took a long time to be able to get back the confidence of the Brazilians that we did have every

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intention of treating them as equals and gradually that program would work through. It's interesting that the whole question of the nuclear business still, however, never was fully resolved. And only recently, while I was in Argentina, thanks to good cooperation with the Argentines on the nuclear issue, we were able to get that spilled over into the Brazilian mess. I thought it was worth mentioning, because, again, it was essential to our policies.

*Q: Well, what you describe there, too, before we go back to your episode with Spain, that seemed to be a problem you have described a number of times. And I guess the best way of putting is the left hand not knowing what the right hand is doing. You're either out in the field, or as Assistant Secretary of State, trying to promote what you think are the policies that should be followed, and suddenly something comes out of the blue here. Why does there seem to be that lack of coordination between people, usually in the White House, higher-ups, going off in one direction, and leaving people in the State Department—because I see that in the State Department memoirs all the time, people talking about that—why is there that lack? Why don't they make better use of the chain of information and command?*

TODMAN: It's a personal and personality thing, and it's a question of grabbing for, or manifesting, influence. "I'm able to do this, so here goes." And it's too bad. There isn't real serious coordination. The NSC should be the place that does this, but every now and then you get people in the NSC who decide that instead of coordinating, they're going to go ahead and act on their own. And so they add to the problem, instead of relieving it. And the rest of the time, there's no bringing of agencies together. One of the things that I did as Assistant Secretary of State was to hold regular meetings with all of the agencies, you know, my counterparts, in all of the agencies dealing with Latin America. And we would talk about what's happening, and what are the problems, how are things working out. And just that conversation allowed for coordination. Because there was a great deal of sharing of information then. And there was no attempt to imposing anything. You have lunch occasionally, or whatever, but if you just sat down and talked about what's happening, then people themselves would say, "Correct". They may say it in the meeting, or they may not.

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"I'll adjust to something that I was doing or was thinking of doing." But there's a need for that conversation which doesn't occur. And a tendency to go off on their own, is part of it. Some of the Secretaries, I know the Secretary of State, for example, have breakfast with their counterparts once a week or once every two weeks. This serves for some things, but quite often they're agenda items. And lots of the things that happen come up in the middle of the day or something. And if you don't have an exchange that's a full one, you can't be sure that you can do something about it and the others will understand. It just happens.

*Q: You mentioned one interesting thing about your Spanish tenure, and that was that you had really sort of more difficulty in the change of the U.S. government than you did in terms of the Spanish government. The Reagan Administration comes in in 1981, very different, very different take on foreign policy. First, let me ask you this. There's often a great deal of reshuffling of diplomatic posts and ambassadorial posts and so forth. Did you think in 1981 that, OK that's it for Spain, I'll probably be reassigned by the new administration?*

TODMAN: Not really, because we were in the middle of negotiations. And it seemed to me, obviously we would want to conclude them, because it's important, the bases are important to us, we would want to conclude them. We were making progress. And it seemed to me that it would make sense for me to continue in the post. So I didn't expect to be asked to move at that time. And as it turned out, I knew Al Haig quite well, so... No, I didn't think I would be asked to move. I couldn't be sure, obviously, but I didn't think I'd be asked.

*Q: Well, that sort of answers the next question I was going to ask. You said that you had such a wonderful relationship with Vance during the Carter Administration. And the question I was going to ask—and I guess you've sort of answered it—were you worried about now working with a new secretary of state under the Reagan administration?*

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TODMAN: No, because I'm career. I've worked with lots of secretaries of state. I knew I wasn't going to be changing the way I am, what I am. No, I haven't had any real problems with people. So, it didn't bother me. And the other thing is, quite frankly, and I think it's a great thing about the American system, is that we operate from the middle. There's a slight move to the right, slight move to the left, little nuances. But fundamentally we don't get any radical changes in American policy from one administration to the other. The rhetoric is one thing, for campaign purposes, but when it comes down, people win on the vote in the middle. And our policies come out in the middle. The changes that occur are not of so significant a nature that one needs to worry about it. OK, so on policy there's no problem. The question of personality: and you can't really guess what's going to happen in terms of your dealing with one or another. And I haven't worried about this. I figure that I'll manage with whoever comes in. I haven't ever, ever been worried about that.

*Q: You were in Spain; that was your longest assignment.*

TODMAN: Yes, yes.

*Q: You were there about five years.*

TODMAN: Five years, yes.

*Q: Were there any problems, did you think, connected with being in one country for that length of time?*

TODMAN: No, not at all. As a matter of fact, I think, I think five years is about a good time. Because it takes you, you know, a little while; half a year certainly, to begin to get to know people around, for them to feel comfortable, for you to really get confidences, for people to be willing to talk to you in confidence about things that they feel, for you to know what to weigh, how to take things. Because people will lead you on, and if you're not able to tell what to believe from what not to, that will affect your ability to evaluate, to judge, to measure what it is you're hearing, what it is you're seeing, what does it really mean, how to



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deal with it. It takes a while to develop it in a different cultural setting. And people feeling at ease with you and telling you the kinds of things that they really feel and really matter, that takes a while. And it's only after you develop that that you really begin to be useful. And then it takes some time to use that. Then before you leave a post, if you know the next post you're going to, you inevitably begin a certain amount of transition, preparing for the next place. So, if you think of what is your useful time, it comes in the middle of that. And we have lots of cases, we used to have, of people moving in two years. The government doesn't get anything out of that. You know, they've just gotten to know the people, for people to feel comfortable with them, and then it's time to start thinking of moving on. So, five years isn't too long, I think. Four or five years is very good.

*Q: OK. At the end of your time in Spain you were assigned to Denmark in 1983. I sent you a copy of an article from the New York Times which was talking about some of the very heavy criticism of the Reagan administration, especially early on, about its non-use of black personnel in the Foreign Service, its misuse and so forth. And your case, in that article, was specifically cited, that, well, "Here's a perfect example. A career Foreign Service Officer being sent from a class-one embassy—Spain, to a class-three embassy—Denmark." First, I want to ask you, in general, do you think those criticisms of the Reagan Administration were warranted. And secondly, let's go particularly to your case with the assignment to Denmark and what you thought about that.*

TODMAN: I don't think the Reagan Administration thought about, you know, I don't think they paid much attention to, "Are we going to be sending blacks?" There's a certain number that will be taken care of, and, OK, you do that. I don't think it was a particular issue with them. And in my case, I asked for Denmark. So, people have the idea of one embassy or another. It's really what's happening in those places. I had a choice of a couple of embassies at that time, and I must say Judge Clark was fantastic. he was in over at the NSC. He called me up. It was time for me to go from Spain. Basically I had done what I needed to do. I had introduced the two administrations. I had accompanied the King of Spain on a visit. I had accompanied the Prime Minister, Felipe Gonzalez, on a visit, a



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lovely meeting with Reagan that went very, very well. The two sides had been introduced, I had been there a long time, it was time to go. There were a couple of people who were ready for assignment and for whom Spain was the appropriate place. There were three of them, actually, sitting in the wings. As a matter of fact, before Tom Enders came out, which, as you remember, happened very suddenly, somebody else came up. I received a call saying that this person who is coming on a visit is going to be your successor, so show him around, and introduce him, not as the next ambassador. And I actually went through that. Then I got another name, so I had two names, one of whom I was told by Clark, "this is going to be it". And, my God, I'm over in Italy at a meeting with Admiral Crowe, talking about major things, and there I get a call saying, "Oh, Tom Enders is coming, can you arrange to get it done right away?" Well, I knew I was going, but the circumstances were rather amusing.

Before that, before I knew who was coming in or anything, Clark spoke to me and offered me a couple of places, and I said, "Denmark." Denmark, a member of NATO, really very important. But I had sentimental reasons. I'm from a former Danish island. I'd been exposed to things Danish before, and the thrill of being able to be the American ambassador in the country which used to formally own my island was something which was just great. Also, Denmark, I knew from Spain and the NATO connection, was extremely important to us. Denmark with its EC connections and its leadership role extremely important. Really, although Denmark is a small country, its voice isn't at all small. It is heard in councils because it has the courage to speak up. And Denmark, in terms of social organization and so on represented something. And so for me, and Denmark wasn't formerly available for career appointees at all. So a chance to go to Denmark was one that I just...I decided that I wanted to go there. I had to go from Spain; I knew that. The people who talk about, you know, class-one posts, whatever they mean by that... Where was I going? you mean I had to be sent to Paris, or to Bonn, or to London? You know, that's crazy. And the people who talk about that don't have a realistic sense of how the business works. It's what's available at the moment, who is pressing, and there

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are some posts that are not available for career people. So you look at the gamut and you say what it is you want. No, it was a choice. It was not be any means a putdown and not regarded so by me.

*Q: Once again, you arrived in Denmark, as you seemed to arrive in a lot of your countries, at sort of a critical point. Denmark had given sort of a slap in the fact to NATO, I guess the year before you got there—the Parliament vote to not contribute to the deployment of new missiles in Western Europe for NATO forces. So that's when you came in there, and obviously that was probably one of your first goals is to try and get Denmark back on the NATO bandwagon. Was it a serious problem that you found in Denmark?*

TODMAN: It was a very serious problem. In fact, I just found a clipping which was interesting, because in an opinion poll taken shortly after I got there, the headline was “Better red than dead.” A majority of Danes said they'd rather be occupied by the Soviet Union than caught up in a nuclear war. The Danes, you know, are a great peace-loving people; no desire to get caught up in these things. There were many people who liked that NATO umbrella, but who felt that there was an aggressiveness and that maybe an accommodation with the Soviet Union would be better. And in any case, they didn't want to have their country exposed to risk. So a lot of what I had to do in Denmark was to talk about burden sharing. Denmark became known, to the dismay of the serious people, as the “footnote country.” Because whenever there was a communique saying that NATO was going to do anything, there would be a footnote: “Denmark takes exception to that”; “Minus Denmark.” So there was a lot of getting...not the government, because the government was quite supportive...but leaders of the Social Democratic Party, which had a major influence on the opinions outside, to accept that there's a certain price that you pay for your security. And as I said, not from the government, because the government was really quite good about it. But it was an uphill battle to try to get some of this turned around.

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*Q: Was anti-Americanism a component of this anti-NATO sentiment, or was that completely...?*

TODMAN: Not particularly, although there was some, I don't know, my predecessor had some feeling that there was anti-Americanism. There was a book, a picture book, put out there with pictures of some of the really unpleasant sites of the United States: *Amerikana Billede* by Jacob Holt, I think it is.

*Q: Right, right, he visited one of the universities I was at to give a slide show.*

TODMAN: OK, he had pictures of blacks, minorities in general, poverty, slum areas, and this was interpreted as anti-American. I never saw it as such. I regretted, obviously, anything that focused on just one aspect of our country and presented that as being what the country was like. But there wasn't very much of that. There was some feeling of our being very aggressive and hard-charging, and sometimes we were. But, the ties were really great. Denmark has held and still holds, the largest Fourth of July celebration anywhere in the world. And it is only for July Fourth—it has no other meaning for the Danes, except July Fourth. And they get up to 25,000 people traveling to the northern part of the country, near Aalborg, and celebrating the Fourth of July with speeches, and demonstrations, and everything. The royal family participates in it. The Queen has, many times. The prime minister, the government participates, people from all over, just to celebrate the American Fourth of July. you don't get that in a country that's anti-American. Twenty-five thousand people gathering in the hills, eating hot dogs and singing U.S. songs and making speeches. They bring over an American speaker and then they have a Danish speaker, and the only thing they talk about are the great, warm ties between our countries. No, I find it was good. There are the people who are opposed, of course. And there are different aspects of what we do that people are not in favor of. But anti-Americanism, no. The business of not spending a lot for defense, yes. You know, not contributing. That was not something they were not too much for.

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*Q: In terms of trying to convince them, as you said, the Danish people, in distinction to the Danish government, how good a job do you think you did while you were there in terms of trying to get this message out to the Danish people?*

TODMAN: I think reasonably well, frankly. I think we did well. Denmark remembers having been occupied and knows that the United States had been involved in supporting the resistance movement, when it got going. One of the touching things that happened this last Memorial Day was to see the Danes come over, the Defense Minister, the Chief of the Armed Forces, a delegation headed by the Crown Prince, who put up a memorial in Arlington Cemetery in honor of the American airmen who lost their lives flying over Denmark, dropping supplies or whatever. And interestingly enough it's a Social Democratic government now, so these are the same people who were against the cooperation. So changes, changes have occurred.

There was one incident that was unpleasant. We had a nuclear policy of “neither confirm nor deny”—NCND—policy as to whether any ship is nuclear powered. The Social Democrats tried to force a vote on the issue because of our ships visiting. And I told them, very frankly, that if they don't respect the NCND policy we just couldn't visit; we really could have nothing to do with them. Because we couldn't change a critical world-wide policy just to satisfy the Danes. That got to a real crisis on account of the opposition. And the government decided it would have to call elections on the issue, which turned out well for the government. But I think we were successful in getting them to understand that they had to carry, have to carry, some responsibility; they have to bear some of the burden for their defense. It's never going to be, you know, a total success, because there is this feeling that they'd rather use the money for other things, and they'd rather accommodate, they'd rather live well. Some of that goes through a fair proportion of the population.

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*Q: With Denmark, too, you had a question of U.S. bases, but not in Denmark, in Greenland. Were you facing the same kinds of problems there that you had faced in dealing with Spain? Of course, the bases were already there.*

TODMAN: Yeah, the bases were already there. But the bases were already there in Spain also.

*Q: Yeah.*

TODMAN: In Spain as in Denmark. In Spain, they were more critical at that time, because we were continuing to fly in that area. Some serious mistakes were made through insistence of Defense. But we did manage to get the agreement, so, OK, we were able to do that. We failed to do something that would have been very, very helpful to us, because people just thought we could get away with anything, and we couldn't. But in the case of Greenland the base issue was less critical; it was critical during war for ferrying over, obviously, because of that North Atlantic stop. But it was more a question of how much was Greenland going to be compensated. Again, we get parsimonious on some things. I remember one colonel who had to come over to Denmark several times to negotiate an agreement, saying that the money we were talking about...he shook the coins in his pocket...was "pocket change". Yet there were things we weren't prepared to do. And the Greenlanders got to the point where they were saying, "Look, you're using a hell of a lot of our territory. We need everything. You should be able to make some kind of contribution." We finally did get it resolved. The issue was what to do with the mess that was around there; cleaning up; what was going to be shipped back to the States. We would prefer the easier way of just burying it right there, but with what consequences later. It was a different kind of issue. It wasn't negotiating on whether we could use the base, or the bases, because we had two of them, Sundstrom and Thule. It was more what were we willing to do to help the Greenlanders. Whereas in Spain, it was actually base rights and respect for the Spanish authority and sovereignty, of giving them the proper right for the control of their territory. There were issues like that that were involved, and it was far more

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critical because we needed them for practice of all kinds, including practice in bombing, target practice, landing practice, very, very active kind of activities in Spain.

*Q: You were in Europe a good amount of time, which leads me to this question. Here in the United States, of course, we were told that the Europeans during the Reagan Administration, the prevalent view of the Europeans seemed to be that here was this crazy cowboy in the White House. There, there you are on the scene: what were the general European opinions of Reagan?*

TODMAN: The idea of the movie actor was one that spread all over, and yet the Europeans respected Reagan as someone with strength and determination. So, that there was sometimes not liking what he might do but feeling that he had the will and strength to go ahead and do it. He was very supportive on security issues. You could count on anything that meant military security, his being there to help, and that made a difference too. So, it was a mixed one on him as a person and so on. People neglected, and somehow the story never came out, of the man having been a two-term governor of California, a state that's bigger than many of the countries, has an economy, has more complex things, so not somebody who had just come to this thing recently, but who had run things and was really, really very able in that respect. So, on a personal level the liking was not there, but at the same time, there was a lot of respect for the strength, and the courage, and the willingness of the man to go ahead and do what needed to be done and of his strong support for military security.

*Q: After Reagan, came in the administration of George Bush. As you mentioned, you'd already had a meeting with Bush and his wife when they visited your post. He came in the 1989 and you went to Argentina.*

TODMAN: Yep.

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*Q: Was this a post you sought, or once again was this just an example of them saying, "Look, you've been in Denmark long enough; you've accomplished your job. It's time to go elsewhere."*

TODMAN: No. Again, I had stayed in Denmark for five, over five years, so it was time to move out, time to come back. And, as I said, I knew President Bush very well, liked him, we got along very well. I saw him at various times and kept in touch. And I was absolutely amazed when I came back, there was a feeling that they're cleaning out the Foreign Service, everybody's going north. And I got a call from the deputy secretary saying, you know they want you to have a post so hang tight. And I got a call from Secretary Baker, with whom I'd worked, again, on various issues, from the Treasury Department primarily, giving me a choice of an enormous range of posts. I couldn't believe it. Because in the Foreign Service they offer you one and you take it, or that's it, that's all. You say, "I don't want that," then there's no place else, that's it, you're dead." And I had, after all, had five ambassadorships and had no particular reason to think that there would be an offer of another one. But I was assured it was going to come, and I was sitting back in Washington, minding my own business, when Secretary Baker called and gave me a list of posts: two in Europe, three in Asia, and three in Latin America; saying, "What do you want?" And I said, Argentina. And I said Argentina because I had visited the country several times before. I knew it, obviously, from the Latin American period. I saw Argentina as a country with enormous potential, great leadership, great capacity to move things, and a tremendous influence on what happens in the rest of Latin America. A country that had, nevertheless, over the years maintained a sort of an adversarial attitude towards the United States. And I just felt that if I could get Argentina to work cooperatively with us, together we could do one hell of a lot in this hemisphere. So, besides I know Buenos Aires and consider Buenos Aires a fabulous place to live. A city of ten million people, with one of the finest opera houses in the whole world, a very advanced culture and lots of cultural activities with very fine people. And so of all, this seemed like the most appealing offer, putting together both the professional business reasons—what I could do for the



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United States, and the personal pleasure to live there, I picked Argentina, to the chagrin, amazement, puzzlement of everyone, for whom Argentina was a bad word. And people couldn't understand. And I know, I remember my meeting with the President, he said, "Terry, I hate to ask you to do this impossible task, but you like to take on this kind of stuff, so good luck to you."

*Q: You faced a very different situation from that you faced in Denmark, where there was a good deal of, as you said, this warm feeling toward the United States. But when you got to Argentina, even though the Malvinas conflict had been years past, there was still that lingering animosity. What was your reception like in Argentina, with the Argentine government? Was it a chilly reception?*

TODMAN: It's interesting because I landed there just at the time of the change. It was an unbelievable time. I went in on a Friday afternoon, so that I could have the Saturday and Sunday to get myself together and see the residence. So my first full workday was the Monday, 12th. That evening I turned on the television and I saw the figure of Alfonsín appear. I didn't know him, but had seen pictures and so on. And I heard a person say, "I've decided to resign as of the end of this month." I said, "Either my Spanish isn't working at all, or this is an impersonator, or someone playing jokes, because no president says I quit in eighteen days. He was expected to stay on until December. So I called up my political counselor and asked if he had seen the news, and he said yes, and I didn't dare tell him what I had heard. So I asked, was it really Alfonsín on? Yes. What did he say? He said, he's decided to resign and leave at the end of this month. I said, "Well, my Spanish is working, it's not an imposter. What the hell is this country all about?" So there really wasn't...I say that just to say that there wasn't time for there to be a reaction to me from the Alfonsín government. Because he just decided to pick up and go. Nor from the Menem government, he hadn't come in yet. But I did call Alfonsín the next day and asked what about a presentation of my credentials, and he said, sure, come along. So I saw him that day, Tuesday morning, and the Foreign Minister was there. And Alfonsín said, "Sorry we won't have much time for working together." And I said, "Well,

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so I gathered from your speech.” I added, “I hope that I can meet with the president-elect before too long.” He asked the Foreign Minister to help me. I had a meeting with her the next day, which I thought was just going to be a courtesy call. Instead, she had her full staff there and we got into all the issues. And in the middle of the meeting, near the end, I guess, a messenger came in and handed her a note, she said, “Show him in”. It means obviously somebody from outside, and she's showing him into the meeting with me and her top advisors. In walks this gentleman, and she said, “Ambassador Todman, this is Dr. Domingo Cavallo. He's going to be the next Foreign Minister. Dr. Cavallo, this is Ambassador Todman. He would like to have a meeting with the President-elect as soon as possible. Can you help us to arrange that?” Dr. Cavallo takes out a little notebook and says, “What about tomorrow afternoon at three?” And I gulped, and said, “All right, thank you.” And so I met the president-elect the next afternoon, together with the president of the senate, his brother, and Dr. Cavallo, his Foreign Minister. We spent an hour and a half going over all of the issues. Again, the reception was great, because he had already made some fundamental decisions, so there wasn't any real problem. It was out there in the street, it was not to me. The Alfonsin government, by then, and the people, the Radicals, his party, was by that time very angry with the United States. Because although we had done a great deal to bend the rules in the Fund and the Bank—the IMF and IBRD—to get him support, in spite of his failure to keep his commitments, to comply, the last time we couldn't do anymore. Everybody said, no, you people have gone too far, pushing us to do things. And he was extremely angry about all that, and felt that we had sabotaged him. So that gave a lot of resentment on his part. And the Peronists had this long-standing resentment of the United States, which was critical. So basically, except for the very small Liberal Party, there were no real supporters of the United States in Argentina, of the U.S., as such. So there was everything to be done to turn that around, at least to work on it. Because as I said the Alfonsinistas had become totally antagonized and the Peronistas had always been. This was not only against us, it was against the World Bank and any foreign institution that dared try to tell Argentina what to do. And so this was out there, but it didn't effect me personally. And once President Menem made very clear the direction

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in which he was going to take the country, then others gradually began to fall in line. And as people got to know me, they found out that I didn't have two heads, and I didn't go around chopping, and the reset of that, and that we could sit and have a dialogue. I had very many Argentines tell me that they never imagined they would see the day where they would be sitting down having a pleasant, smiling, friendly conversation with an American, and especially an American ambassador; they told me that, once I had gotten to know them. So, it started out way over, but it changed. But it didn't hit me initially, because of the circumstances in which I entered into the country which I just described.

If I may go back to my time as Assistant Secretary for Latin America. Again, I think a major accomplishment was the establishment of the Caribbean Basin Initiative. For the longest while the Caribbean had been treated as a stepchild and regarded itself as that. And as I spoke to Caribbean leaders they were seeking some way that they could participate in plans for their own development. They felt as though people handed out what they wished to when they wished to and these things were not always relevant to their own development needs. So I did a couple of things that I think made a difference. I invited the governor of the Virgin Islands and the governor of Puerto Rico to participate in conversations about what should our policy be toward the Caribbean. And then I spoke to the leaders of the Caribbean and then all of the donor countries, and arranged for a conference in Washington based on agenda items worked up by the Caribbean leaders. I remember Henry Ford of Barbados played a very, very big role in this, and Paterson of Jamaica. And we had the first real meeting with all of the donor countries and the donor organizations. And out of that came the idea of the Caribbean Basin Initiative. We got Central America into that also. And for a while we were able to do a little bit of funding. Then as money started getting tight, the money started being shifted to Central America. This was after I left. Again, the things that I started just sort of drifted away, because the other assistant secretary didn't have the same kind of focus—understandable, each person looks at things in different ways. But we did actually energize the Caribbean during that time there, and

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encouraged the Canadians to work very closely with us. And I think a new spirit was born in cooperation in the Caribbean during that time.

*Q: That supports what Richard Fox, who was appointed ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago during that time, said. One of the things he did during the Carter Administration was look through the ambassadorial appointments, and most of the appointments to the Caribbean were, basically, political appointments and, as he suggested, not always the best people. But I think that went along, as part of what you're talking about, the Carter Administration started to really make a point of appointing career Foreign Service people to that area.*

TODMAN: It was a serious move to get the Caribbean to be taken seriously, and to get them to be a major part of the determination of what would happen with them. And I think it made a difference. It hasn't continued, unfortunately, but neither has many other things.

*Q: Back to Argentina. One of the, as you mentioned, one of the problems that the Argentine government had been having prior to your arrival, had been with a lot of the international lending organizations and so forth. We haven't talked much about this in terms of your other ambassadorial appointments, but perhaps this would be a good time to do it. As an ambassador, what was your relationship to these international organizations to try and get them to cooperate with the governments to whom you were sent. I've noted in some other ambassadors' memoirs, and so forth, as saying that this was really a frustrating part of their job, working with the International Monetary Fund, the IBRD, and even some of the U.S., Ex-Im Bank, those kinds of things. What was your kind of relationship with those organizations?*

TODMAN: It was very dynamic, very active, and I'm prepared to say, key in getting a lot of the support for Argentina. Let's take the U.S. organizations first. Ex-Im Bank. When I went for my briefing at Ex-Im Bank before going out, the then-president of the Bank said that he had a gift for me to take to Argentina, and this was the message to them that Ex-Im

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was going totally off cover: no short-term, no medium, no long of any amount. And I said, "I don't think that's funny at all." The Ex-Im Bank was created for the purpose of providing lending in cases where normal commercial banks were not willing to do it for one reason or another. And I know that you have a fiduciary responsibility, but at the same time you have to go out front and help in this whole process. And he blew up. He said, "Nobody's going to come into my office and tell me what my organization is supposed to do or how to do it. I'm leaving." He got up and walked out of the meeting. And I continued the meeting with the other people who were there. And I asked, "What's wrong with that guy?" That was the first and only time in my life I had that; really blew up and left. But I didn't think it was funny for him to be telling me that his is what I'd be taking down. And so after he went away, we continued the conversation, as they outlined to me some of the problems they had had with Argentina. So I took those down to Argentina and spoke to the Argentine authorities about the things they needed to do start repairing this relationship. And we just started one by one, little things that they could do. And I kept in touch with the Ex-Im Bank, to make sure that these things were happening. And by the time President Menem came up here on a visit in September of that year, three months later we were back on short-term cover, and by the time of his next visit Argentina was on full cover.

OPIC...OPIC was frustrated because they had projects there, applications for projects that had been pending for nine months, almost a year, no answer. I worked out with President Menem an agreement that if an answer were not received to an application within thirty days that project would be considered fully approved. I said, "If people have any objections a month is more than enough time for them to come back and say, no, for these reasons, or to say we need additional time to study it. But the pigeonholing of it, or the waiting for people to pay off, wasn't doing Argentina anything." And he agreed with me. That was established. OPIC developed to have the largest number of projects, percentage-wise, in Argentina that it has anywhere around, because projects just kept getting approved all around. The Trade Development Program, which had not at all been active in Argentina.

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I got Priscilla Rabb and spoke to her about the opportunities down there to help get the Argentines to work. And we did eight feasibility studies, one after the other, for Argentina.

On the Ex-Im Bank, the IBRD and the Inter-American Development Plan, I knew Enrique Iglesias very well from my time as assistant secretary. But the more important thing was to get to know the U.S. representative on these organizations. Because unless the ambassador can establish good relations with them, and get them to be supportive, then not too much is going to happen. So I got to know our representative on each one of these organizations. But in addition to that, when I came back on every visit to the United States, I went into visit the organizations to find the senior most person responsible for every activity and every project in Argentina and then I got to know the heads of the organization. I established a wonderful relationship with Camdessus, for example, so that anytime that I was there I would go talk to him directly about projects. And I would be supportive and I would agree that I would join in getting the Argentines to understand his message and to respond when necessary. So I worked really as closely with them as I did with the U.S. government. And when the Argentines couldn't get things through, and needed things in an emergency, they'd always call me. They'd say, "We're having this problem, we're not being able to do this, they're asking for this which we can't do, but we can do this, can you help?" And I was able to pick up the phone and get something moving, with all three of those organizations, plus the U.S. organizations. And on a number of issues where things were just stopped, my intervention broke it through for them and got the approval and got things going. I kept in very close touch, of course, with Treasury, because Treasury's the one that has the representatives. I worked very well with David Mulford. I'd go and see David very often, talk about whatever was happening, see what it was that needed to be on it. Because there were times that the Argentines weren't performing and one of the big things that I helped the Argentines to do was to meet their commitments. Because one of the problems was that it had lost credibility; it would promise everything and then fail. There was no problem prevailing on Cavallo for this. But to get it happening took some time. To let them know you shouldn't promise if you

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cannot comply. When you make a promise, keep it. And the moment that this business of compliance became established in the minds of the international organizations or the U.S. lending agencies, then it was fine, because they knew that it could rely on it. If we say we're going to do this we're going to do it. And once that was established, then lots of problems that had been there before began to disappear. I know that made a difference. And I know that several times my personal intervention with these agencies tipped the scales in favor of Argentina. And the Argentines knew it. Several times I talked with Treasury, the banks, the Federal Reserve, both in Washington and in New York, on issues for Argentina. When they were getting into the refinancing of the loans, I spent a lot of time. So, it was working with outside institutions to try and get them to be supportive of what Argentina was doing. I believed in what the country was trying to do, and I communicated that belief. I had to do it personally, because people in the State Department didn't particularly feel favorable toward Argentina and weren't very concerned with helping. But, it worked.

*Q: It certainly did. From this being an assignment where the President had apologized for having to send you down there, by the latter part of your stay in Argentina, here was Argentina, a nation that we had had very strained relationships with, being the only, if I understand it clearly, the only Latin American nation that actually gave assistance to the United States during the Gulf War.*

TODMAN: Right.

*Q: How did that big a change come about? Was it just an accumulation of all of these things that you had been doing?*

TODMAN: I suppose so. Menem made a basic decision. He said this business of the adversarial relationship hadn't paid off a thing. The business of Third Worldism hadn't done anything for his country. And that if you believed in certain things, why not act on them? There was some really basic things that had to be changed in Argentina. They



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were going ahead with this, with the missile development program. It wasn't a native Argentine program. Somebody from outside brought the stuff in, were putting it together there, and then they were going to sell it, riding on Argentina's back. And the moment one was able to talk to them about this, and they were able to stop and think about it, "Why the hell are we hurting ourselves on this, on the missile issue?" They were going ahead and trying to pursue a path of development which meant that we were denying them access to processes, information, and material that could really help them to advance in the nuclear area. And as you spoke to them, they began to think, "Wait a second. What the hell are we getting out of this crazy thing we're doing? If we don't do this, we can get these advantages which will mean a great deal more to us down the way." So, what it did was to take an enormous amount of courage on their part, to one, seriously consider the issues and, two, to decide to make the realignment, to move away from old things, into things that were more beneficial to them. And to back away from this idea that if somebody is telling us about it, maybe it's no good for us. Because that temptation is always there. But at least they were willing to give a serious examination to the things that you presented, to weigh them, and to see how they worked. On the nuclear issue, I worked closely with Dick Kennedy, with whom I had worked before for Spain. An absolutely first-class person, a great mind, with a great ability to relate things to other people's interests, take into account what it is they're looking for, and find ways to satisfy some of their concerns. And again a wonderful combination, and it produced this feeling of confidence in people, that they could rely on what we were telling them.

*Q: In terms of Argentina deciding to assist in the Gulf War, was that something the U.S. government pressed them on, or was just a decision they made themselves?*

TODMAN: It's a decision they made. We didn't press them. We made the usual appeal that we make to everyone on these things, that it would really be important for the world, and it would make a great impression on the Iraqis, if there were broad participation from all over, so that this thing were not cast and seen in light of the United States against Iraq, which it was not; that protecting the territorial integrity and the sovereignty of Kuwait, a

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very small nation, is something important; that the world should send the message that some big bully is not going to be able to move in and take over what it wants in another place, and that this is something that deserves clear manifestation from everyone. But this was a message that was being delivered all around. And the Argentines said, "Yeah, that makes sense." And they decided.

*Q: How did that go over with the Argentine people? Were they highly supportive of the decision?*

TODMAN: They were doubtful, they were doubtful, very. Because this was such a departure from the kinds of things that they had done before. But as they saw later, you know, Argentina up there with the big powers doing this, Argentina standing up, it changed, the attitude changed. There was a lot of skepticism and doubt initially about what Argentina was getting into, but one of the things that the Argentines decided to do was to establish their own position on issues before getting into conversations. So the old business of going to Latin American meetings and aligning themselves with what was there, starting from zero, changed. They would go in with a position. So that out of the meeting would come, if agreement was possible, an agreed Latin American position. But not coming from zero with Argentina. They would have had an input into it, because they would think about it independently before going in, before going into the meetings. The business of the non-aligned, you know, stopped. Because the feeling was, "What the hell is in this for us? What are we gaining?" And Menem was quite straightforward about it: "What are we gaining by going and denouncing the major powers? What are we doing in positive terms?" His way of thinking was totally different and this was new. But on the specific Gulf thing, we informed them of our wishes, but not any more and not any more forcefully than we had done to anyone else. And they just decided on their own that this would be good thing to do, because it would demonstrate to the world that there is a new Argentina, and that it's ready to do the kinds of things that were in keeping with the UN. I think Argentina today has more, has forces in more of the UN missions than any other

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country. Because, again, it decided that peacekeeping would be a major occupation of the Argentine armed forces.

*Q: I guess after about four years in Argentina, 1993 rolled around and you decided to retire. Of course, decided, that's after 42 years. Did you want to continue or did you decide in 1993 that 42 years is enough?*

TODMAN: I didn't seek to continue. I came back after the elections and had meetings with the Secretary. I came back really to tell him about some of my concerns on international issues; to share with him particularly my concern of the disarray that exists in American foreign policy today, of the incursions into the role of the State Department being made by agencies all around, doing their own thing, and the negative consequences for the United States interest. We didn't get a chance to talk about much of that because he had not kept up with the changes in Argentina and was way behind. He thought the military still ran everything and that democracy wasn't there, and so our conversation ended up being an update on Argentina, rather than the other things. But people asked me about what posts I was interested in, and I said, "I'll look, if you've got anything that you want to offer, I'll be happy to look at it." And I would have been. But it's not a question of a post for the sake of having a post. I don't need that. So I didn't do any campaigning. I spoke early, after Clinton won; yeah, after he won, I spoke to people on the transition team who were asking me to list the posts that I wanted, and the answer to them was the same: I'm not listing anything, because I'm not looking for anything. But I am available. I feel very well. You already know I can handle things. I think that at this stage I can deal with any of the posts that we have, and if the administration feels that I can be of use in any of them, I'm here, I'm ready, I'm willing, I'm able, but I'm not listing and posts because I'm not pressing for anything." And that's about where it came out.

*Q: Were you disappointed that there wasn't an offer of something, like another assistant secretary position or something, from the Clinton Administration?*

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TODMAN: No, no, no. I wasn't disappointed, but I wasn't surprised. Christopher was deputy secretary of state during the time when I was assistant secretary. And I wouldn't have expected Christopher to turn to me to be one looking at things. Feinberg was the Latin American man in S.P. (?), and I had prohibited Feinberg from attending my meetings when I found out that he was leaking to the press immediately afterwards. Yeah, I know the people, and there had been enough specific instances where one thing or another had occurred which I'm sure did not endear me to them. And they wouldn't have any reason to think that I had changed in my own beliefs or my style of operation. So I had no reason to think that I had changed in my own beliefs or my style of operation. So...I wasn't looking for anything. But this decision of mine of not looking, occurred long before the President made his designations. So it's not related to what happened, you know, to the actual designations. So it's not related to what happened, you know, to the actual designations that occurred. Although after they took place then I knew, that was it. That's fine.

*Q: Was it hard in 1993 to sort of hang up the diplomat's hat?*

TODMAN: No, because almost immediately I started working, the National Academy of Public Administration asked me to do things with them. I started doing that almost immediately. I stayed, since I was up in Washington, I was very active in the Atlantic Council activities. I was giving some courses, some lectures over at the Foreign Service Institute, training diplomats. I was asked to come up to the Institute and do things for them. So that...

*Q: Retirement wasn't exactly retirement?*

TODMAN: No, no, no. It started immediately, and actually I'm busier now...I intended to retire, that's why I came down here. But I'm spending a lot of time traveling. I'm now on the Board of Directors of Aerolineas Argentinas, the Argentine airline, so I have to Buenos Aires for meetings, which should be monthly, although I don't make it that. I'm trying to put American and Argentine investors together on projects, which keeps me going

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a great deal. I'm helping the National Academy of Public Administration that has just set up an institute of public administration in the Republic of Georgia, because my graduate degree is in public administration, and people in the field who know me called on me to help bring that about. So we came up with selecting professors, establishing curricula, and selecting textbooks for that institute which is now operational. I just got through with a major job on the NAPA panel that looked at the global positioning system—GPS—who should manage it and how should it be paid for, which took a fair number of meetings. And I still attend various functions of the Washington Institute of Foreign Affairs. I was just up at a meeting with Larry Summers with the Atlantic Council. I have gone up to breakfast with Congressman Ben Gilman. So, there are too many things that are going on.

I'm an advisor to the governor of the Virgin Islands, so this involves travel there and travel for when he's in Washington, and keeping up with things to tell him to do. It means Tampa is, well, we're not here enough. It poses problems, because there's so much traveling, very few people come through Tampa, although I've managed to persuade some of the ones who had to see me, to come. But not very many people come. So, most of the activities I have are in Washington, New York, occasionally in Miami; so there's an enormous amount of movement. And we have silly little problems, like what do you do with the newspaper delivery, and what do you do with the mail, not have them pile up. Our neighbor is selling, so we can't ask him to pick it up for us and they're not here often enough. But it's a very, very busy life. I'm heading out to Denver—that call I got earlier—this weekend, for a major meeting on Latin America and the United States. There is a very heavy Argentine delegation participating, and they asked me to come and be there for that. So, I'll be involved in that. And then down to the Virgin Islands when I get back. An enormous amount of traveling that's going on, and I'm still juggling lots of balls today.

I just was on the nominating committee for membership in National Academy of Public Administration, which is a very, very small body. We're less than four hundred, about three hundred and fifty throughout the country, including administrators on all levels and professors of public administration at all the universities in the United States. And

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we're keeping the number down there, so you think of the number of people in public administration, either teaching it or practicing it, on all levels in this country, it's tough. So, we sat down, went through that, came up with a list. That takes a lot of work. I've just been reviewing some of the biographical information that we're going to send out on the nominees that have to be voted on by the full membership. But I'm still juggling very, very many balls, instead of doing what relaxes me. I'm learning a lot and getting through a lot more than I did, actually, running embassies. It's fascinating.

*Q: I've got a last few questions here, sort of an overall look at your career. One thing that comes through very clearly in almost every one of your assignments, especially your ambassadorial assignments, with the possible exception of Costa Rica, is that they really seemed to be almost trouble-shooter appointments. There were problems in these countries that you went to, and sometimes very severe, starting with Guinea, Chad when you went there, Denmark, to perhaps a lesser extent, Spain, Argentina. These were not, in other words, just nice smooth assignments that you got there and everything was rosy. But, on the other hand, in almost every instance things did turn around. In the case of Argentina, in the case of Guinea, which I think was even more dramatic, I don't want to put you on the spot here, but I ask you, what really do you think are the personal qualities that you took in as an ambassador that allowed you to take these very, very difficult assignments and, in most instances, take them to a very admirable conclusion?*

TODMAN: I think a sense of openness, of leveling with people; a willingness to hear and consider their viewpoints; how do they see it, what are they looking for in this, what are they after, what's bothering them, why are they really getting upset, and a willingness to really listen to what they have to say and examine it, seriously, to take seriously what they're telling me. A willingness to treat them as equals, not to talk down to them, not to say that I'm pushing anything on them, but to say, "OK, we've got this issue here that we've got to deal with." A willingness to let them know very clearly what it is we can do and what we can't do; what we can accept and what we can't accept. To understand that we're not trying to condition their behavior, but that they should understand that their

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behavior results in certain reactions from us, which they can predict and expect. Do what you wish, but just understand that if you do this, this is what we're likely to do; these are the parameters. I'm not saying don't do it, but do it recognizing that this is what we can do, this is what we can't do, this is what I think we may be likely to do. I think by going in with that, by leveling, letting them know they can count on the things that they're told, we've been able to turn things around. Sekou Toure knew that I would not lie to him; that if he heard that this was happening and he told me, I'd say, "I'll look it up and I'll tell you." And I told him, "If you don't like the way it comes out or you still feel you should blast us, then do so, but then at least you have facts that you're doing it on. In Spain, just letting them know they had our respect, and telling the United States Government we cannot infringe on the sovereignty and the dignity of other people; we don't want it to happen to us, we can't do it to others. Not abusing. And I believe, and I practices all along that any agreement that does not have something in it for both sides is not, and cannot be a lasting agreement, because the side that gets nothing out of it will be forever trying to break it in order to try and get something. So, these are some of things that I've taken in that I think have made a difference.

*Q: You held ambassadorial positions for about a quarter century, from the late-60s into the early-90s. Did you see any changes in the status and the position of the ambassador in terms of the foreign policy making chain of command in the United States during that period? Did the ambassador lose importance, gain importance, what kinds of changes took place, if any?*

TODMAN: I think that the ambassador lost importance. I think that it started when you got a peripatetic secretary of state, who decided that if there's any important issue he would have to go out personally and deal with it. And as this occurred you got chiefs of state saying that it's not worth talking to the ambassador, because that means it's not important enough. We need to discuss it and we need the secretary to come. There used to be more roving ambassadors who would come and bring a special message sometimes, which was OK. But the secretary of state was at home controlling the whole thing and looking at it,



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and you could go back and ask about it. That's gone. I think some areas of the world get neglected, totally, because there's nobody back home minding the shop who can send out the serious kinds of instructions that you want. you don't get the consistency you need. And some other areas get over-attended, but attended at a level that they shouldn't be getting, at least in personal and direct terms. I think it's a change for the worse. I don't know whether or when we can every recoup from that, but it's unfortunate.

The change in the news media, the ready availability of new, has made an enormous difference also, because you're not now often taking in news, you're commenting on it. Because some story has broken and people have heard about it or seen it, and so when you go in, so what's new? And one of the more irritating practices that we continue to have in the Foreign Service is to send cables out after the thing has been on the news instructing you to go tell the country that this has happened. For Christ's sake, what do you think they've been doing? They saw it on CNN ten hours ago. Go wake them up at 2:00 in the morning to tell them that this is what happened? That has had a major difference in the way diplomacy is practiced, because now there's a need for a lot more thoughtfulness and giving more rationale for action rather than telling what the action is. Precision about what happened and explanations of why it happened, and bringing people along.

And the other way the role of the ambassador has been diminished, which is even worse, is by the number of direct contacts that are made between senior U.S. government officials and senior host country officials. Increasingly, people bypass the embassy totally, and pick up the phone and call somebody that they met in a conference. And it doesn't have to be from the secretary, from the Department of State even, where at least you'd know what was going on, but it can be from any department that has business overseas, any of them, directly to counterparts in foreign governments, with the result that the department, the ambassador may or may not know. And I found increasingly in my last time, at the end of my period there, that I would learn from the Argentines things that U.S. government officials had done. I would be the first to learn of it outside, and then I would inform the State Department of what had happened. State would not have known at all. But these

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things were done, and conversations were going on, and I would know only because of the nature of my relations with the host country. In many countries, I'm sure the ambassador never gets to know, until the thing is signed, or done, or some consequence of it appears. They're the kind of things that concerned me, and that I wanted very much to talk to the Secretary of State about. Because I think that they are creating problems for the United States and they will create even more serious problems.

*Q: Let me ask you another question which also be as unfair as some of the others. you worked with a lot of different administrations, from the Truman right on into the early days of the Clinton Administration. Overall, in terms of your service in the State Department, which administration, if you had to pick one, would you say was the easiest for you to work with, work under?*

TODMAN: That's a lot harder to say, frankly, and I mean it in all sincerity. It's a lot harder to say. Because I have a style, I shoot straight, and I've done it with all. And working from overseas it's a lot harder to tell. And as you get under the Carter Administration, of course, I had really outstanding access to the Secretary and to the President, which I didn't have to the same degree from Spain. Because of the issues that I was dealing with I had excellent access there also, but that's because of the bases question. And also George Shultz was a wonderful person. But if you're sitting right there in Washington then it's totally different from being overseas. Working with Shultz was quite good. Working with Reagan, I had many times to actually sit and talk with him and brief him. This administration I left very early. It got off to a start that I found troubling. The President was having meetings with foreign head of state without the benefit of a briefing from his ambassadors accredited to the country. I don't see how that can make any sense at all. Sometimes without the ambassador being present in the meeting. Now, that doesn't make any sense, because if somebody goes out there, no matter the circumstances under which the person is sent, he's the president's ambassador for every purpose and he has some insights into what's going on which should be heard. And in the meeting it's important for him to be physically present. So, that got off to a disturbing start. I don't know what it has evolved into. But

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relations during my career have been very, very good. With Al Haig, they were fantastic, I haven't had any real problems.

The concerns I've had, and I've raised with all of them, is what we do about black Foreign Service officers, on which I think we do a terrible job.

In every meeting I've ever had a secretary of state, I have tried to discuss, apart from the matters of substance, the question of doing better on the position of minorities. I have always contended, and continue to contend, that you don't do this for the minorities, you do this for the United States. We need, as a country, the very best input that we can get into policy formulation and policy implementation. There are sensitivities that people bring into a meeting that you can't get otherwise, and sometimes the very composition of the meeting, even if the person does nothing, becomes a reminder, when things are being considered, how they ought to be treated. It just clicks something there. And the same person would see things differently, or speak about things, or approach things, in one context with one group of people, from the way he or she would do with a different group. And it's not because of any bad intentions or anything else, it's just that the circumstances, the atmosphere, brings out things that it's important to have as input into our policy formulation and execution. We're denying ourselves of this by not bringing in minorities. When we're talking about China, Japan, and of the Asian countries, it would make an enormous amount of difference to have some people of Asian background sitting in that meeting as we discuss what we're going to do. Just seeing them there, one would react differently. And inputs and sensitivities that they would have would make a difference. So, as I look for what is good for the United States, which is the bottom line for me, I think we're doing ourselves an enormous disservice. And so I've raised it constantly over the years, and it's just because there is no desire to act on it that nothing has happened.

The South Africa question. While I was ambassador to Denmark, there was this announcement all of sudden one day and I started getting telephone calls asking if I was going to be the new ambassador to South Africa. You know, I didn't answer the calls.

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Fortunately I was on a selection board promotion panel at the time, so calls couldn't come to me directly. The secretary was to make a list so I could return them. I didn't return any, because I heard what the questions were, and I knew that this was damned nonsense. I later discovered that, I think it was Art Buchanan, probably true, who told Reagan the way to deal with the South African problem was to appoint a black as ambassador. So they picked a fellow, someone from the South that they couldn't get approved, but the decision was to go ahead in any case and keep it black. So if you can't get him approved, get a black career officer. So, OK, who stands out as the black career officer; the only one with rank, and so on, and so it turns to me, although I didn't know any reason why it should later I went to see Secretary Shultz on a totally different issue. And when I got ready to leave he said, "Oh, I thought you had come to see me about South Africa." And I laughed. I said, "No, I wouldn't do that. That thing is too silly for words. I wouldn't waste your time on something like that." He says, "Wait a minute, wait a minute, it's not silly at all, it's really serious. The President really would like to do this." And I said, "Well, you're wrong. And not for me." And he says, "Well, what's wrong with it?" And I said, "Mr. Secretary, if you're serious, I would really like to tell you." He said, "Yeah, why don't you write me a paper." So I wrote a paper on what was wrong with U.S. policy in Southern Africa, and gave it to him the next day. I got a call back from him two days later to come talk about the paper I had written. And he'd gone through it and highlighted, and all the rest of that. And he said, "Well, your points make a lot of sense, but the President is not willing to open a discussion on the South Africa policy; he doesn't want to revisit the issue." I said, "Then, Mr. Secretary, if he doesn't want to, then I'm not the person who you would want because I'm not at all interested. Painting it black doesn't mean that you would be changing anything." So he asked me if I would come out in opposition to someone who might take it. I said, "I'm a career officer, I'm loyal to the career and the State Department. I would never think of opposing publicly if somebody else wanted to do it. In fact, I would certainly wish that person the very best." And he says, "All right, thanks for your attitude." I know that my standing on the Hill was such that my doing this could have swung a couple of votes on some things that we were trying to do with South

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Africa, so I absolutely wouldn't take it. But many felt that this was something I should do. I went back to Denmark and found an enormous number of farewell invitations and expressions of regrets that I was leaving, but that I was the best person to go to South Africa and get this thing going, and farewell, don't forget me. I had requests for interviews, from many people. So I said, "Look, if you want to come and you have any questions, I'll answer them." So, they came and I told them I wasn't going. And that came out as a press conference, and, of course, since it was impromptu, there was no prepared text. The Department was frantic trying to get a text of my press conference statement, and the rest of that. We got in a transcript. But in any case, that finally died down. But when I went before the Senate for confirmation as ambassador to Argentina, and Jesse Helms asked me why didn't I take the assignment to South Africa? I said, "Senator, that was a racist farce, and I had no intention of participating in that kind of thing." And everybody said, you will never be confirmed, you just finished your career right here. I said, "Well, fine. It was a racist farce. It was a play, put up, paint our policy black, and then everything's fine." And, Helms said, I heard you had a press conference. I said, no, I had a meeting with the press. He asked for me to send him a transcript of it. So, I got a transcript and sent it up to him, and I had no problems getting confirmed. But it's the whole issue of getting black into matters is what I find abhorrent. I think the country deserves better than that. And I think the State Department is really very, very shortsighted. They've taken in people reluctantly, very few of them at middle grades, and have put them through the revolving door, and the ones inside have very little to look forward to. And they're still there now. The black Foreign Service Officers have a case where they're being abused with collusion between the lawyers and the State Department. And it's just shameful. We're hurting ourselves in the process.

*Q: Why do you think that is? Going through the State Department documents—as I have—since World War II, the State Department certainly recognized that this hurt the State Department, hurt the United States, not having enough black Americans in the State*

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*Department. Secretary of State after Secretary of State has made press conferences, news statements about how we've go to do something about this...*

TODMAN: Yes, yes.

*Q: And I think you noted in the earlier interview that the administrations start off with a great push for this, but it dies out quickly. Here's a case of really, the United States shooting itself in the foot, with something that would not be that difficult to change. Why isn't there more effort in that area?*

TODMAN: I don't know, I just don't know. I think they really don't care about it there. I think the people who are at the top get caught up in the myriad other problems that they have to deal with of a substantive nature. They therefore find that they don't have time, that's the way they would put it, for this. People don't pay much attention to personnel anyway, to individuals. They look at policies and issues as if somehow these things are created by themselves and not by individuals. Because they don't look at the people who are dealing with them, and look to their needs, and look to the needs of getting better, other people to deal with them. They just think, "My God, the Middle East is out there, I better go look at it." They don't ask, "Do I have any Arab-Americans in there or, you know, have I made it a point to get some Jewish-Americans in there talking about these things? No, no, no, I've got to go do something about it." And in the case of black Americans, it's not even on the screen. It's important to make a strong statement at first coming in, because the problem is there. But following up would take a certain amount of time and they just don't give priority to it. And because the establishment, the ones who actually run the things, have no particular reason to want to change it, unless they're forced to, it never will change.

*Q: If you don't mind, just to finally end, because you've been kind in giving me so much time here, maybe end on a more up note. Looking back on what was a very long and distinguished career, and once again this probably isn't a fair question either, what would you say was your proudest accomplishment during the sum of your career?*

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TODMAN: There were several actually. I made a difference, and the first one was on the intermediate targets and dates. It goes way back. Because I think it set the stage for the independence of African countries, the former trust territories and non-self governing territories, at a pace that probably would not have occurred. Going after that, I think time in Togo was really important, because the self-help money that I was able to use for projects, getting markets and schools and clean waters and wells, made a difference in the lives of people, so that lots of people were living better, changed their attitudes towards life, towards the United States, and making contributions that they would not have been able to make. I think more dignity, more a sense of that was created among people than would have occurred. I think it was really important. In guinea, I think getting Sekou Toure turned around and seeing that we weren't evil and that going down the road of close association with the communists was one that wasn't doing him or his people any good and that he could work with us, was...I think it made a difference for the United States that clearly mattered.

As Assistant Secretary of State, getting relations with Cuba going, getting an Interest Section established, getting people freed, getting Cubans being able to see that they could work with the United States, being able to stop the constant shooting and incidents over the maritime boundaries, getting some food in for the people of Cuba, was important. Getting Latin Americans to believe, to understand, that we could deal with them on an individual basis, care about them, work out things that were respectful of them, helping to do something to strengthen the belief in democracy and democratic institutions, giving people a hope that they weren't going to be left alone when being abused by governments, I think, was really important to me. It made a difference. Being able to allow the United States to continue in Spain, at a time when we came very, very close to losing the possibility of doing so, was really critical. helping the Argentines to begin to realize some of their dreams, by getting American opinions turned around on the country and on the people and on the party, I think, has a lasting effect. Getting the Caribbean some



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recognition and getting them participating in matters affecting their lives. These are things that mattered. I think that they made a difference.

And frankly my one very big regret, it's my greatest one I think, is that I didn't succeed on the Nicaragua issue in getting Somoza out on his own so that that country could have been spared all of the hardship, the suffering, the deaths that it went through. And the U.S. could have been spared all of the problems that we subsequently had all because of a small-minded policy of vindictiveness.

*Q: Actually, this goes back a little ways, but better to ask it than not at all. Something about your retirement in 1993 was very special. you were toasted by Congress at the Statuary Hall. That was a singular honor, and that must have been a very gratifying experience for you.*

TODMAN: It was. I felt very humble about it, because it was the only time in American history that a government servant has been so honored. And to think that of the people who came out to do that and in that setting, is something that I had no reason to expect and I certainly don't deserve. There have been a lot of people more deserving. But that's nice to see, you know, that it was done to someone. I can hope that since it has happened for me that it might for somebody else. You serve and you serve the country. And it takes all kinds of service to keep the country going, but I think the role of the diplomat continues to be critical to keeping America free. I think it's more than military might. It's getting across to people what our values are and getting them to cooperate with us for the spread of those values in the world, that really matters, and it matters to the entire country. And so it seems to me that the Congress of the United States is the place where this can best be shown the feeling of the country on this. And I feel very grateful and very proud that that was done, and I hope it opens the way for other people to do some things also.

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*Q: Well, if you have any last comments or other points that you'd care to make. It's such a long career and I'm sure that we've barely touched on some of the things that happened during it. But, just give you a chance for any concluding comments.*

TODMAN: No, there's nothing that comes. I can't think of anything that I would rather have done, frankly. It's not very easy. The unfortunate thing is that most of your problems are with your own government, because people don't have a perspective of dealing with others. And we're so accustomed, in this country, to having everything, to doing what we want, making what we want happen, that we're not always as conscious about people out there. And we're very quick to accuse people of localitis, which is unfortunate, because if the people who are on the scene don't express what they're seeing, then who is going to. And the other thing that is disturbing is that the country is not aware of the importance of the role of the Foreign Service Officer, the diplomat, for the country; the benefit that this brings to the United States. And actually when you consider that we're so involved in the world, that so many livelihoods depend on this, the American economy depends on what we do abroad. Unless there are people from the Foreign Service that are out there making sure that the relations can be kept on a sound basis, the United States would suffer. And I'm not sure that that is understood at all. It's largely our fault, Foreign Service people, because we don't do very much to let people know what we do and what difference it makes. We let the false images of some kind of strange or high life be spread out there, and we're considered as sort of extras not involved. And Foreign Service people are far from that. But if we don't go out and make it known, we're not out there spreading it, then people obviously aren't going to know about it. I used to spend a lot of time, as I spoke in communities around the United States, reminding people that much of what they made was sold overseas, much of what they used, consumed in the U.S. was made overseas, that they live in an interdependent world where the ties are everywhere. And you need some people who are doing the job of making sure that these things work and work primarily for the interest of the United States. I think we get caught up also in military might, that we forget sometimes that that doesn't solve anything. And so the role of the

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diplomat is somehow undervalued, even by people who are in government, in policy making. I think today we're arriving at a time in the United States, as we somehow feel that physical, military security is the only thing that we should look for, and we don't work with people if they're not making a definite contribution to that. I think that we can lose a great deal if we get carried away with that, because there are issues of justice, there are issues of decency, of humanity that are important. On human rights for a long time we never considered social or economic well-being as human rights, we looked only at torture. So people could starve to death and it didn't matter, or if they had no place to sleep, it didn't matter. But if they were in prison, then that was it. And we've come a long way, because at the last major meeting on human rights, we acknowledged that there might be some validity to including economic rights among the human rights. But it has taken very, very, very many years and a lot of difficulty for that to be brought into our consciousness and to our acceptance. So, we're moving but the movement is slow, and you get times of regression.

On immigration today, we're talking about keeping people out, and at the same time cutting back all assistance. You can't do both. If you would help people to have a better life in their country of origin, there would be less incentive for them to come to the United States, less pressure. It would cost us a great deal less if we would just provide some assistance to the countries from which most of these immigrants are coming. Most people like to live in their own homelands. They come out because they don't find it tolerable, they don't find life there possible. So, the greatest immigration policy that we could have, the most effective one would be one of a small amount of assistance to the countries from which people are immigrating. But at the same time that we're saying no assistance, as if somehow you can lock places and keep people out. And inevitably, whatever laws we pass, people are going to continue to flood into the United States; they'll find a way. So, we'll build up more police forces and more barriers and more punitive measures, and spend infinitely more for those kinds of things, than we would for decent policies of assistance to help them put their own places in shape. But these messages are not getting

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out. Sometimes I feel that I ought to go out and talk a little or write a little bit about some of this, but I don't know. Maybe I will still one day, seeing where that fits in. It's matter of getting my own priorities in order. And it's conceivable that I may put that high enough on the list that I may try to get this message out. Because I'm disturbed at where the country is today, in terms of matters that affect our foreign policy. The reduced role of State, absence of the State Department on practically all of the economic and trade issues in the world, as if we didn't exist. And I don't see how you can have coherence in policy if we're not involved. The unawareness of anything that State is doing, the minimal input of what is supposed to be the President's chief advisor on matters of foreign relations on so many issues. And the adoption of policies affecting our country that I think will harm us in the long run. They're very troubling. And even if I'm retired from the official part of it, I still can't help but get involved. Like when I see letters that go out insulting other countries. If I see, it I can hardly resist the urge to call somebody and say, "For God's sake, do right." I'm sure I'll continue to do that, whatever else I'm involved in. Because I believe in that country, and I believe in continuing to be of service, and I know that you can do that without actually being a member of the State Department's Foreign Service.

*Q: Well, I really don't know how to thank you for all the time that you've given to these interviews. And the information is absolutely invaluable. I just thank you for your time.*

TODMAN: You're most welcome.

End of interview