

10-22-1975

## Interview no. 182

Raymond Telles

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UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

INTERVIEWEE: Raymond Telles (1915- )  
INTERVIEWER: Oscar J. Martínez  
PROJECT: Bicentennial  
DATE OF INTERVIEW: October 22, 1975  
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BIOGRAPHICAL SYNOPSIS OF INTERVIEWEE:

Equal Employment Opportunity Commissioner and former El Paso Mayor.

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW:

Biography; campaign for El Paso County Clerk; Poll Tax; campaign for Mayor; ambassadorship to Costa Rica; accomplishments during his term as Mayor; school years at St. Mary's; influence of parents; assimilation; stereotype of the "lazy Mexican."

1 1/2 hours.  
41 pages.

## BICENTENNIAL

M: This is an Oral History interview with Commissioner Raymond Telles of the Equal Opportunity Commission, Washington, D.C., October 22, 1975. Conducting the interview is Oscar Martínez from the University of Texas at El Paso.

First, Commissioner Telles, could you tell me where and when you were born?

T: I was born in El Paso, Texas, September 5, 1915.

M: Could you tell me a little bit about the background of your parents and grandparents?

T: My grandparents, on the side of my father, several generations ago came from Spain. My father and my grandfather were both born in Ysleta, Texas.

M: Natives.

T: Yes, they're natives from that area. My mother, of course, was born in El Paso, but her parents and grandparents originally came from México.

M: What part of México, sir?

T: I'm not sure, to be honest about it, but I understand probably Chihuahua. I was very, very young when they died, so I very vaguely remember my grandmother on the [side] of my mother. As far as my grandparents on the side of my father, I don't remember them at all because they died before I was born. That's where we came from and, of course, all of our families (and I'm speaking

of both my wife and myself) are from El Paso. We were all born in El Paso. I have two brothers in El Paso--Richard and Joe. Richard, as you know, is the County Commissioner. He has been County Commissioner for about 12, 14 years. The other one--Joe (José Ignacio)--is in the transfer business and has been I guess most of his life. He took it up from my father who was in that kind of business. We lived in the south part of the city or what you generally recognize as "south of the tracks." Our home, where I was born, is on 8th and St. Vrain, right there by the canal, just a couple or three blocks from the river. Of course, I came from certainly a poor, working family. My father was quite interested in his community. He was involved most of the time with a group of his friends in politics--not as a candidate, but in his efforts to try to select those people who were running for office who would be sympathetic to the problems of the Spanish-surnamed--Mexicano or Chicano or whatever you want to call him. He was active in the political field in that way, and he had many friends that followed him and worked right along with him trying to improve the situation of our people. In fact, that was the way that I became interested in politics--actually through his desire, through his request. I wasn't too much in favor of becoming involved in politics. Before leaving for the Service I was working for the Department of Justice in the Accounting Division. When I came back from the Service I was indeed fortunate. I came out as a Major in the Air Force, and my father and his group of friends felt that I was qualified and that I had a good war record behind me. Having gone in as a buck private and come out as

Major--they felt that that was important and that maybe I should attempt to break the ice. Break the ice in the sense that he and his friends felt that it was time that we as a group (speaking again of the Spanish-surnamed American--Mexicanos or Chicanos), it was time that we became more directly involved in the political life of our community, of our county and state and so forth. So when I returned from the Service my father, along with a few of his friends, suggested to me that I should run for County Clerk of El Paso County. I wasn't interested in politics and so I just actually refused to do so. This went on for a number of months, I guess. I'm speaking of 1947 and part of 1948.

M: What were you doing at the time?

T: I came back to my job with the Department of Justice and I was back in my government job when I came back from the Service in 1947.

M: In a different position than what you had left?

T: No, the same position with the government.

M: But you were returning now as a Major.

T: Yes, I was an officer in the Air Force, but that didn't necessarily have anything to do with my job.

M: You didn't get a promotion?

T: No, not really. During the time that I was absent, of course, the salary for the particular grade that I was working had been increased some, but not that much. So, actually as far as a better job--no, I didn't get it. So, anyway, my father and his friends kept insisting. At one point I felt that in some way I had more or less hurt my father's feelings--not only in his own concept or idea that we should become involved; that we should care about what happened to our people; what we should do in order to improve the political,

economic and social situation of our people. He felt that I should become involved. Anyway, to make a long story short, my father had had his feelings hurt by me and certainly he had lost a little prestige in the eyes of his friends because they all felt that, "Gee, here's Raymond who just came back from the Service with a pretty good record; he should become involved." In order to try to correct my refusal, I told them, "OK. I'll ask for a leave of absence from my job and I'll go ahead and run," never really thinking that I could win because the odds were pretty much against me. It was the first time in the history of El Paso, and I guess Texas, that anyone with the name of "Telles" or a Spanish name would even dare consider the idea of launching a campaign for any major county office, in this case El Paso County Clerk. I honestly didn't think that I could win; I thought the odds were pretty much against me.

M: Why?

T: Well, for the simple reason that it was evident that the Spanish group who were qualified to vote was small to begin with. But secondly, the majority of them were not registered to vote, because at that time it required the payment of \$1.75 for a poll tax. The people in the south part of town did well to keep body and soul together, much less go out and splurge on paying for a poll tax. That was one reason. Then, of course, the majority of the voters, the majority of the population, were of other races--Anglo and so forth. So in actual numbers the opportunity was very slim.

M: You're implying that the majority population would not be supportive of the Spanish-surnamed candidate.

T: Oh, I think that that was pretty evident. The fact that no one

up to that time had even dared to run for a major office was pretty indicative of the attitude of the people there.

M: What did you perceive this attitude to be, Mr. Commissioner?

T: I think that we were tolerated as such. But by the same token, as representatives of the community, of the county, of the individual citizen of El Paso, we were just not accepted as such. Whether they thought that we were not capable of good representation or whether they just didn't like somebody in a major office with the name of "Telles" or "Sánchez" or "Martínez" or whatever, might have had something to do with it. So, what I'm saying in effect is [that] the opportunity and the chances were, in my mind, very, very slim. But in any event, in order to correct this other situation with my father, I decided to go ahead and give it a try. I worked hard at it and certainly my father and his friends worked pretty hard at it. The first job was to try to get as many people as possible to pay the \$1.75 and register. As a matter of fact, the campaign that was put on for that purpose was quite successful, I'd say, in terms of number and previous registration, which was somewhat low, yet not of the number that was really required to win an election. But in any event, I went at it and really put everything I had into it. My father and his friends worked pretty hard--my family and everybody else.

M: Mr. Telles, forgive me for interrupting. Was there any feeling in the Mexican American community at that time that the payment of a poll tax, in itself, was discriminatory against the poor Mexican American?

T: While they might have in practice felt discrimination, I don't think, if I recall correctly, that they thought that the \$1.75

was there to prevent them from registering. As a matter of fact, \$1.75 to them was a lot of money. So they looked at it on the basis of, "Well, do I pay a poll tax for \$1.75 or do I go and buy groceries for my home?" So, that's the way it was. I don't think that they looked at it too much from the discriminatory angle as much as they did as to "What does \$1.75 mean to me and to my family?"

M: What about the leadership within the community?

T: Again, I think the leadership felt the same way. I don't recall that they at any time referred to it as being discriminatory, other than the fact that it was very difficult for them to pay it. But I don't recall, to be honest about it, that anybody ever said, "Well, this is discriminatory," while it might have been. They felt everybody paid \$1.75 so it was all right.

M: Looking back, did they change their minds afterward, as the years have gone by?

T: Looking back one could say that it was discriminatory, only in [this] sense: a poor family would benefit much more at that particular point from spending \$1.75 on groceries than from going out and paying a poll tax as compared to someone else, an Anglo or whatever, that maybe had a good job or a better business [or was] making more money. From that point of view, I guess they felt that it was not proper. But I don't think, if I recall correctly, that anyone ever said, "Well, this is discriminatory in itself." In other words, while they felt that, yes, south of the tracks [where] the Mexicanos live, the poor people live... they sort of accepted the situation in somewhat of a normal attitude in some ways. I'm not saying that they didn't want to improve,



that they didn't want to do and be involved in better things; but I think it was one of those situations where you say, "What the heck can we do about it?" This is what my father and these other people were trying to do--provide the leadership that could wake up these people to the fact that they were not really being allowed or provided, through whatever method or system, the privileges and rights that they were entitled to. It took that kind of an action. So when I ran, of course, that was indicative that they needed some incentive. That was another reason. In other words, the majority of our people could care less whether Mr. Smith or Mr. Jones became elected. To them it was the same thing--one or the other. There was no real benefit to be derived from either one of them.

M: Democrat or Republican?

T: Well, at that time there was no such thing as a Republican. It was all Democrat.

M: That's true.

T: It was actually one party. If you were nominated in the primaries, that was tantamount to being elected. Your name would appear on the ballot for the general election, but you wouldn't have opposition. So, actually there was only one party in existence, not only in El Paso County, but in the whole state. There were some conservative elements, naturally, but not identified as a true Republican group. Anyway, going back to the election, we worked hard. There were a number of political issues that came up. Fortunately there were only two of us running. I was running against the incumbent, P. D. Lowery. He had been in office ten years, which made it very difficult, in my mind, to remove

him, because I'm sure he had made many friends. By the same token, there were some issues involving not only the efficient running of the office, but also his own personal approach to people. In other words, they used to claim that, "Well, only during election time do you speak to me. After the election is over, you don't know me." This was the kind of thing. So, there were some issues that helped. We worked hard and I was elected by about 565 votes--a very small margin. The counting of the votes lasted for, let's see...Saturday was the election and we didn't know the result until Sunday evening, when generally the count is all taken care of Saturday evening. But there were some boxes lost that we couldn't find; boxes that were delayed. I'm not going to say why they were lost or why they seemed to be late, but in any event, there was quite a delay in the count.

M: Was there suspicion of hanky-panky within your organization?

T: I think that there was suspicion of hanky-panky by supporters of the opposition. In fact, many young men became involved and they were assigned as a security force to watch over the ballots. They'd go out to the precincts and stay out there and wait for that box to come out.

M: By their side?

T: By our side, when we became somewhat suspicious that something could happen to the votes, because there was delay in coming in with the vote and so forth. By then we were concerned. So a number of our friends--young people--went out and played security trying to get those boxes in. But like I said, it wasn't until 9:00 the following Sunday evening that we were able to determine the results of the election.

M: You mentioned some issues as being significant in your eventual election. What were some of these issues?

T: As I said, the main issue was the efficient operation of the office. I think that many people felt that the office was not being operated efficiently. Secondly, the individual's personal attitude once the election was over--he didn't seem to know people. I don't recall. There were several other issues that made it possible. Fortunately I was the only one that dared run against him, because he had been in office ten years. Consequently, even another Anglo [who would want] to run against him [would] think twice. We were the only so-called fools to even tackle somebody that had been in office ten years. But we felt that that was really the office that we should go after, and we did.

M: Did either of the two newspapers support you?

T: Yes. The one that supported me was Ed Poolley who was the editor of the El Paso Herald Post. The other newspapers were totally against me; and of course all of the money, the banks and so forth, were not for me at all.

M: Who were the groups that supported you?

T: The groups that supported me were primarily our own people. They united, and this is very, very important. Today, one of our problems is getting our different groups--all groups of Spanish-speaking ancestry--to unite. If they would unite, I think that they would have a better representation and better impact upon not only the political life but certainly the economic life of our people in the country. But in my case, the main group was the union of all our people which was very, very significant and important,

[and] their getting out and paying a poll tax, which they hadn't done before. As a matter of fact, [there was] a rather interesting incident in the box in San Elizario: The majority of the voters or the residents there at that time were Spanish-speaking. My opponent went out and hired four people to work for him in that precinct to try to get the votes in. But when the votes all came in, I had all the votes except two. My opponent was quite unhappy and disturbed because he said, "Look, I paid for four workers and I only get two votes. Now how can that be?" He felt that at least he should have gotten four votes from his paid workers, but he didn't! It was very, very interesting. I only wish that I had made notes at the time because I think that I could write a book about the many incidents that happened which made it quite significant.

M: Do you recall any other incidents?

T: Not off hand. I can't really. I suppose if I sat down and had a lot of time and started thinking back and maybe even meeting with some of our friends, I could recall some of those more interesting incidents; but at this moment I can't. But anyway, I think it would have made a very interesting book, not only [about] the first election, but my other elections.

M: In that campaign, was ethnicity a factor? Was ethnicity played up in the press, or did your opponent make reference to it?

T: Oh yes, very definitely. There's no question about it. He didn't make any bones about it either. For example, we used to go on radio--at least he did because he had the money. I very seldom went there because I didn't have the money. But he did, and he'd

go on the radio and say, "I want the people of El Paso to know two very important things. One of them is that my name is P. D. Lowery and the name of my opponent is Ramón Telles. Secondly, I want the people of El Paso to know that he's a Mexican and I'm an Irishman." At that time it was pretty typical, I think, of the way some people felt. He wasn't shy about shouting it out. I think that that, too, might have played an important part in the minds of some people. I'm speaking of the Anglo voter. Some people probably resented the fact that he was doing this. I certainly couldn't have won the election without the participation of other people in my favor, because as I said, the vote of our people was certainly very small.

M: Do you recall your feelings when he made reference to his being an Irishman and your being a Mexican?

T: My only feeling was that it certainly made me somewhat angry because I felt that that was uncalled for, that it wasn't necessary. The result of it was that it just made me work that much harder. But it was a disturbing element, there's no question about it, even though in some way it was probably more acceptable then than it is today. Today I think that if there is any such discrimination, it's a little more covertly than out in the open. But at that time I guess he felt that it was the thing to do. It did disturb me undoubtedly, but all it did was to make me work harder.

M: Did the El Paso Times make any reference to ethnicity?

T: No, they didn't; not that I can recall at this point. But they were very definitely very much opposed to me for whatever reasons. I'm not going to try to judge their intentions or reasons for it.

The only one [who supported me], as I said, was Ed Pooley who was the editor of the Herald Post. He was great; he was for the underdog. He was for the little fellow. He was that way until he died. Many, many times, even during my years as mayor, he was the only one that supported me. The other newspapers were against me. He really went out and fought to the extent that I think that at times his job was in jeopardy, because all of the big money was opposed to me and they were putting pressure on the employer, the owner of the newspaper, about Pooley. I think that at some point his job was in jeopardy and he could have lost his job very easily. I think that if I had not won as mayor, he probably would have lost his job. He was the only one that really came out strong for me.

M: How do you account for his support toward you?

T: I think that the man was an honorable man, an honest man, a man that really had a sincere interest in the welfare of the community. I think he was a man of compassion, a man that was trying to look out for the little fellow, the underdog. I think he had many, many qualities, as I said, not only as a gentleman but as a man of honor and a man that was interested in his community.

M: Sir, could you tell me about your experiences as a County Clerk in El Paso? What events stand out in your mind during the time that you occupied that position?

T: I don't recall any particular significant events, other than the fact that everybody's eyes were on me. They were watching to see what I was going to do, particularly those who had opposed me. They wanted to see if I could really do the job or if I was going

to be a dividing element between the so-called Anglo and the Mexican American. But, of course, I became quite involved in my job. One thing that my opponent failed to do when he was in the office [was] to make his presence noted. I moved my desk from a private office out into the front of the office where everybody that came into the office [could see] me. This is something that I think the people liked. I was there to meet the people, to make certain that my employees were courteous and provided the kind of services that they were looking for. Apparently they were satisfied with [me] because I was re-elected three other times, without opposition. So my biggest problem was getting over the first hurdle. Once I got over that one it seems that I didn't have any problem after that.

M: How long were you in that office?

T: I was there from 1948 until 1957.

M: You were elected Mayor in '57, is that right?

T: I was elected Mayor in February of '57.

M: Could you tell me about the campaign for Mayor?

T: That was a very interesting campaign, too. Again, I could write a second volume on that one. Many people would come to me and say, "Ray, you've been a wonderful County Clerk. If you want to be re-elected 1,000 times, why, I'm sure we'll re-elect you as the County Clerk and you can be there in that office for the rest of your life. But as Mayor, that's something else." In other words, some people, and I say some, understood that it was possible for me with the name of Telles to do a job, because I think they were pretty convinced by then that I could probably do a job.

But the idea of someone by the name of Telles representing them-- not only within the community but in the outside communities, in the realm of cities and states and so forth throughout the country, particularly in Texas--that was one of the problems. They would say, "Well, as County Clerk, great! But, gee whiz, as Mayor, why that's something else." Again, that was the first time that anybody [with a Spanish surname] dared run for the office of Mayor of a major city. As you know, El Paso is the fifth largest city in Texas. It was pretty difficult to accept--and in some ways I can understand because this had never happened before--some young up-start coming in and trying to derail the method of operating in the past, as far as city administrations and the way that the candidates were selected. It was very difficult to accept. All of the big money and big business was definitely opposed to me. The newspapers were opposed to me. The only one, again, that was for me was Ed ~~Poley~~ley, the editor of the El Paso Herald Post. Like I said, he came very near to losing his job. As I mentioned before, I think that if I hadn't been elected Mayor, he probably would have lost his job.

M: Was ethnicity a factor with your opponent in this campaign?

T: It wasn't as obvious, but I'm sure that in the minds of...

Let me go back. My opponent was Tom E. Rogers, who was the incumbent. He had been appointed as Mayor because the Mayor who was elected apparently decided not to accept the responsibility as Mayor and he became quite ill; he had some kind of nervous breakdown even before he took the oath of office. He had been pushed by big money when he was elected. Somehow he became quite nervous about the situation and had what appeared to me



like a nervous breakdown, so he took the oath of office for the purpose of re-appointing somebody else. If he had not taken the oath of office because he was ill and in the hospital, then they would have had to have had another election. But as it was, he was asked to take the oath of office. He took the oath of office in the hospital and in a matter of hours he resigned. The [new] Mayor was appointed by the City Council, but at the insistence of certain groups who selected the Mayor. This was Tom E. Rogers. However, I will say one thing: I had and I still have a great deal of respect for Tom Rogers because he certainly was a very honorable, prominent citizen of our community; a man that in many ways contributed much to the welfare of our community. He had been involved in many civic endeavors--the Chamber of Commerce, and everything else. Therefore, there was nothing personal, as far as I was concerned, against him and I don't think there was anything personal, as far as he was concerned [against me]. It was more the people that were behind him that were creating the problem.

M: Who were they and what was the problem?

T: Big money and big business. The problem was that they were putting up all kinds of money which I didn't have. The fact was that they didn't want me to be the Mayor and come in and disturb their little playhouse. They were accustomed to selecting their own candidates, putting out the money and electing them. But when I came in, of course, that disturbed the whole set-up and they weren't pleased with it.

M: Who were the powerful individuals and the powerful groups in El Paso at that time?

T: I couldn't begin to name them; there were just too many of them. I think that the best general way to describe them is as "big business" and "big money." I certainly didn't have the money. We had an awful time trying to get enough money to put up as the filing fee, because I think it was several thousand dollars that was required. Incidentally, I went out and ran as a ticket. In other words, I had four other young men as candidates for the City Council. That was a very interesting situation in getting people to run with me because I would go and ask, say, a businessman if he would like to run with me as a member of the City Council. Generally this individual would say, "Oh, that sounds like a good idea. Fine, yes." A couple days later he would call me and say, "Ray, I'm sorry but I've been thinking about it and my business needs me, and maybe I better not." But it wasn't that at all. Pressure had been put on him. I lost a lot of potential candidates that way. So finally I had to end up with four young people who had no ties with big money or the big banks; therefore no pressure could be put on them. Ted Bender, who is with television, certainly helped a lot because of the fact that he had been on television for a number of years and people could see him and knew him. Other than his salary, he had no business ties with anybody. Jack White, another very bright, up-coming young man, was with one of our Ford agencies in El Paso in the Service Department. There, again, there was no pressure that could be put on him. Ernie Craig--a very close friend of mine; we had been in the Service together. He was an insurance salesman. There, again, he was more or less on his own and pressures could not be put on him. The fourth one, who also became a very good, close friend

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of mine, was Ralph Seitsinger. He was the only businessman in the group; he had a small furniture store in the Lower Valley. Apparently he was quite independent--independent enough that he didn't have to depend on whims of big money or the banks. So after losing a number of potential candidates I ended up with these four young people. As it turned out, they were very fine members of the City Council. They were all elected with me.

M: The entire ticket went in.

T: Yes.

M: Were you the only one who had political experience in the group?

T: Yes. I was the only one at that time that had any political experience at all. And I was the only one of Spanish extraction or ancestry.

M: What was the reaction in El Paso to your getting elected?

T: Well, the reaction was certainly very significant. I think it was done only in our group, in our people, which was very favorable naturally. The opposition never dreamed that I could ever win. It was kind of a shock. The opposition never thought that this could be possible. In fact, I remember we were having dinner at some restaurant and the news came out that I had won. Of course, generally the waiters were Mexicanos and they were very happy and pleased. On one occasion they were fired because of their loud expression of happiness and, I guess, because the owner of that restaurant wasn't for me. This was very, very interesting.

M: These people were fired in front of you, right there in that restaurant?

T: Well, not in front of me, of course.

M: Later?

T: Later, yes. And it was determined that the reason [was that] they had been too elated at the fact that I had won; they [the owners] didn't like it. In fact, the opposition had already planned a huge victory party at the International Club, I think it was. Then the word came through that I was ahead and that I had won, and the party just flopped. People were quite unhappy. It was just like a bunch of people attending a funeral.

M: What was the margin of your victory?

T: If I recall, it was between 5,000 and 6,000 votes. The interesting part about that, as I explained to you before, [was that] up to that time there was only one party, really, in existence in Texas and certainly in El Paso. That was the Democratic party. So in the past, any time that you were nominated in the primary, for example for Mayor because we did run, it was a partisan thing. I mean, the State Constitution called for a primary and a general election. It was more the city ordinance, I guess. But, as I said, once you were nominated, well, that was tantamount to being elected. Your name would appear on the general ballot, but it didn't mean anything; that was it. But in my case, for the first time in the history of El Paso this wasn't true, because after I had won the primary, the people with money and so forth, came up with a write-in candidate. This fellow was pretty popular also. He had been connected with the schools for many, many years and was well known. So they tried in the general election, which was certainly very strange because it never had happened before. As it was, I won by a bigger majority, I think, because people generally are fair. It was very strange to them that they would try to defeat me for a second time. In other words, I had won fair and square and

they couldn't understand why they would try it again. So this time I think I won by a margin of three to one, or something like that, in the general election. That was a situation where for the first time a second candidate had been chosen to run against the successful candidate in the primaries.

M: You were Mayor two terms?

T: I was Mayor two terms, yes. In **fact**, the second time I didn't have opposition. The third time I had announced that I was running for Mayor--that was in early 1961--I had my slate of Councilmen and I didn't have opposition. So it looked at that point that I was going to run for the third term without opposition. But then at that point, after I had announced, President Kennedy came along; he was elected and he took office, as a matter of fact, in '61 as President of the United States. He came to me about a month after he had taken office and asked me if I would accept the appointment as the United States Ambassador to Central America. At that time I didn't know for sure what country it was, but then later on I found out that he had Costa Rica in mind. At that point I refused, I rejected the offer of appointment, because, first of all, I had already announced that I was running for the third term. I was not being opposed--at least not up to that point. That's the best way to run, without opposition. Thirdly, in the four years that I had been Mayor I had, certainly with my members of the Council, initiated some major programs [and] I was hoping to see the conclusion of those program; and I felt that I needed at least another term to do so. So there were some very, very good reasons why I would not consider it at the time. A couple weeks passed and I was asked to

come to Washington. Well, as it happened, I was coming to Washington on city business anyway, so I came up and I met with the President and I met with the Vice-President Johnson and I met with Senator Dennis Chávez of New Mexico. Between the three of them I was convinced that I should run. I think that the deciding factor, as far as I'm concerned, was not so much that it was an honor certainly and a big job. I think the deciding factor was that I had the opportunity to break the ice, and possibly for the first time a Spanish surnamed American was being offered the opportunity to be a United States Ambassador, to represent our country in a foreign country. So I felt that that in itself was a responsibility that I had. I had been the first Mayor of Spanish ancestry, a Mexican or whatever; I had been the first County Clerk the same way; now it was time for me to break the ice in the international field, which I thought was necessary in order that people coming behind me wouldn't have that problem. They could be accepted as normal people without any particular discrimination or "ifs" and "buts" about it. I did come up with a number of conditions, because when I came up here I still wasn't quite convinced that I should run after talking to the President and Vice-President Lyndon Johnson and to Senator Chávez. I did present some conditions; if they would accept [them] then I probably would accept the appointment. I don't remember some of those conditions, but I remember primarily that I didn't want to resign as Mayor. I wanted to complete my second term which would terminate in April of '61. Secondly, I was not a man of any wealth at all; I depended on my salary for a living. I told the President that he [would have to] assure me that it would not cost me any money, because I didn't have any. It's generally known that in many

of the Ambassadorial positions, the Ambassador has to put money out of his own pocket; in some countries quite a bit, in others less. But still, it was pretty well known that that was true. So I told him, "Look, I don't have any money at all. I depend on my salary for a living. If you can assure me that I will have the necessary funds for representation or whatever--that I don't have to provide any additional funds--well then, of course, I'll accept." There were two, three other conditions. I was pretty satisfied, when I went back home after leaving Washington, that they would not accept at least one of those conditions, and that would settle the whole question. In a matter of about 48 hours after I reached El Paso, I got a call from Washington advising me that the President had accepted all conditions. He was ready to appoint me if I was willing to accept. So there it was; I couldn't back out then. I had to publicly withdraw from the race and then Ralph Seitsinger took over as the candidate for Mayor. But that's more or less the thing. Of course, I'm skipping a lot of the details because it's not possible to give you all of the details.

M: I'm interested in the reaction of your family and your supporters.

T: Naturally I discussed this with my family; of course, my wife primarily because my daughters were very young then. They were only five and eight. They really didn't know what was going on although they knew that President Kennedy wanted to appoint me to a big, important job, and so from that point of view, of course, they understood. With my friends, I think there were mixed feelings about that. They had seen me struggle; they had been behind me and had supported me all the way. They had been with me in these battles

that we had trying to break the ice, trying to gain due representation as County Clerk and then as Mayor; so a lot of them had mixed feelings. Some of them didn't understand what was behind this whole thing. Some of them thought that it was a plan on somebody's part to get me out of the political field and send me away somewhere where I would be far away and lose contact; because you do, and I did, lose contact. That was a main concern, I think, of many of our people. In fact, I still meet some of my old friends and they still believe that that was a sinister plan to get me out of the political arena, because somebody might have had in mind that maybe I would go into Congress or something. But honestly, as far as I know, there wasn't anything like that. I think the President just felt that it was time that a person of Spanish-speaking ancestry should become more involved. As you and I know, the interest of President Kennedy [was] in providing a better living for minorities; he also had a great love for Latin American, for example. That was a well known fact. And everybody in ~~turn~~ loved him. So I'm sure that there was no plan whatsoever. It was just, I think, an opportunity for us to move a little higher in the political arena. Like I said, I was the first person of Mexican or Spanish ancestry that was ever nominated and appointed as Ambassador. After that came Teodoro Moscoso from Puerto Rico. He was named Ambassador to Venezuela. Later on there was Ben Hernández from New Mexico who went to Paraguay; and then later on was the present Governor of Arizona, Raúl Castro, who was named two or three years later as Ambassador to El Salvador. So, in a way, I guess I did break the ice and gave other people the opportunity to come in. It's unfortunate, of course, and quite a tragedy that President Kennedy died because



I think that he honestly had in mind appointing additional people of Spanish ancestry to positions of importance and certainly Ambassadorships throughout Latin America. In fact, in 1963-- this is not known, this is something that happened--he had asked me if I would accept the Ambassadorship to México. This was in July of 1963. [This was] the last time that I saw the President alive. I had been with him on a trip, because he used to call me back to Washington from Costa Rica. Whenever he traveled in the Southwest states he'd call me to go with him. This was the last time that I went with him. He called me and I came to Washington, and we traveled down to New Mexico and Texas and California. He asked me if I would accept the appointment [as] Ambassador to México. I said that I certainly would. So in July of '63 I thought possibly I would be going to México by the end of the year. I was still Ambassador to Costa Rica. But, as it turned out, of course, he was killed in November. My opportunity to be Ambassador to México went out the window because President Johnson, of course, had other ideas and I certainly could understand that. But in any event, if I had to do it over again I think I would still do the same thing, insofar as trying to not only provide but give a little to a situation which I think was necessary; and that is to the improvement of not only the political but also the economic and social life of our people.

M: In retrospect, then, you have no regrets about going in a different direction instead of continuing in electoral politics?

T: No. I don't. In all modesty I think that because I accepted the challenge--because it was a challenge. It was just like when I was elected as Mayor and County Clerk. People had their eyes focused

on me as to whether or not I would do a good job. That's another thing--I felt that I had a double responsibility, not only as an official of a government, but also I had the double responsibility to my people. In other words, I had to not only do a good job, but a better job than possibly anybody else in order that I wouldn't close the doors to our people coming behind me. If I had done a bad job or if I had been a failure in doing the job, I think that would have automatically closed doors on people coming behind me. So I felt that I had a double responsibility and I was very conscious of it. That just made me work a little **harder**, that's all.

M: Mr. Telles, you mentioned that when this offer from President Kennedy came in, at that point you felt that you had a responsibility to finish some programs that you had started as Mayor. Could you tell me about those programs that you wanted to tend to?

T: We had a major flood control program, for example, that had to be put into effect. We had gotten a bond issue approved by the people. Another one was the freeways that now you can see in El Paso. The majority of those freeways were planned during my administration. They were approved on paper at that time. Of course, I had other plans. For example, having come out of South El Paso, out of the tenement area, I felt that I had a responsibility to **improve** the living conditions of South El Paso. I was instrumental in having a number of those tenements torn down and certainly to come up with replacements for them--for living locales or places for our people. So I had a very, very strong feeling about that. I felt that this had to be done. I felt that job opportunities should be developed

and provided. For example, at the time that I took over there was not a single Mexican American as a member of the Fire Department. In the Police Department there was only a couple of old detectives that were there only because they knew Spanish and they needed interpreters. But other than that, there just wasn't any. In the top city officers, for example, there just weren't any Spanish-speaking Americans. I felt that that was a lot of responsibility. And I did; I opened up the doors in all those Departments. If you go back to El Paso now and check the Police Department, you'll see that things have changed considerably. If you go to the Fire Department, you'll find that to be true and also in the city offices. What I'm saying is that these are some of the things that I wanted to do. I did open the doors and the acceptance of our people to these different jobs was already in motion. Many of them were appointed during my administration, including the City Engineer, for example, which was of great importance. I appointed some Assistant City Attorneys, Mexicanos. One of them is now Judge Robert Galván. He was one of those. So there were a number of what I would consider major projects that I had initiated, and I wanted to see them develop and come to a conclusion.

M: Were you, at any time, accused of being partial toward the Mexican American?

T: No, not that I recall. As a matter of fact, when I was first elected Mayor, a group of church people--ministers--came to see me. They in effect warned me about their concerns and fears that now that I was elected I would probably be an element that would divide the community and create problems. My only answer to them was that, "Well, I've been elected Mayor by the majority of the people. The

only thing you can do now is to wait and see." But they were going to warn me about that. Well, at the end of my first term I got a very nice letter which I keep and I treasure. This same group came back with a letter which was very complimentary, stating that I had been an element in uniting the community. That was a great amount of satisfaction. I know that they had worked against me-- I mean worked hard against me--and they had been critical of me. During the campaign there were many, many rumors started--not necessarily by them, but by other sources--that if I were elected I was going to bring not only disunity in the community but I was going to open up a house of gambling, a house of prostitution; they did everything in the world to try to discredit me. Fortunately, I had a clean record up to that point and they really couldn't sustain or support their contentions. But as I said, one of the greatest satisfactions was having this group come back and provide me with this letter.

M: What do you consider your major accomplishments to have been during your administration as Mayor?

T: We went out and did many things I think--opened up new streets, paved streets, built recreation centers, built the new Art Museum--a number of material projects. [But] I think that two things stand out in my mind. First of all, I think that in some way I was instrumental in bringing unity within the community. Secondly, I think that my presence as Mayor contributed to the lessening and diminishing of suspicion on the part of people against the Mexican American, and [brought] more acceptance that, "Well, maybe a Mexican American can do a pretty good job, too. Give him the opportunity

and I'm sure that he will perform." To me, that was certainly a satisfaction. I think that the other was the fact that I had broken the ice. I opened the way for someone else to follow in my footsteps and become involved in the political life of our community, and be elected and serve in these high political offices. I think that those were two of what I would consider maybe a number of major accomplishments.

M: What about the relations between El Paso and Ciudad Juárez during that time?

T: I think that we certainly enjoyed some of the best relations between the two communities. One element that was certainly helpful was the fact that when I was Mayor of El Paso, René Mascareñas was Mayor of Juárez. René and I had been in high school together at Cathedral. He was a couple of years ahead of me--a couple of years older probably. But we had known each other at school and therefore we were very good friends. So we were both serving as Mayors of the two [cities]. So as I was saying to you, I think that the relations across the border between Juárez and El Paso were very, very excellent partially because of the fact that René Mascareñas was the Mayor of Juárez. In fact, there were times when I used to be invited to Juárez to cut more ribbons than in El Paso! I used to participate in a lot of their social functions and civic activities as Mayor of El Paso. I used to be asked to come and start the campaign for Red Cross funds, for example. I became involved as much as I could. I don't recall any major problem that we ever had between the two communities at that point.

M: There is one issue that I'm particularly interested in during the time of your administration. It has to do with the pressure put

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upon the labor unions to have a stop put on the part of the U.S. Immigration Service to the commuter program. This happened around 1960, 1961. Do you recall any big problems emerging from that debate?

T: No, I don't recall off-hand any major problem that we had along those lines. I think the problem developed after I had left, but I'm not certain. I don't recall, during my administration there as Mayor for two terms, that we had that kind of a problem. As far as commuters, there's always a problem, but I don't recall it as a major problem. It turned out later on that someone was suggesting to place soldiers, military people, along the border. We never had that kind of situation as far as I can recall.

M: I guess it escalated after you left.

T: I'm sure that it did.

M: The "bracero" program ended in 1964; that resolved part of that pressure that was put on the Congress.

T: I'm not saying that the problem wasn't there. I suppose it was, but it never did escalate to the point where it became a major issue. Like I said, we maintained our relationship on pretty good terms.

M: Mr. Telles, I want to go back to the early part of your life and ask you some questions regarding some of the factors that influenced your individual development. First, what influence did your parents have on your early life?

T: To begin with, we were a very close family. There were actually five sons--no daughters--except that two of them died when they were babies. So there were only three of us left. The same three

are still living, thanks to the good Lord. We were a very close family. My father was a hardworking individual. He believed in helping our people. He believed in trying to improve the economic situation of the people, and as a consequence he went into the, what they called then the "transfer" business--the trucking business and the taxi business that he developed. He was a brick layer by profession, and they tell me he was a pretty good one. He believed in organized labor. He was very much involved in that. During the many years that he was out of the profession, that he wasn't building homes as a bricklayer, he maintained his membership in the Bricklayers' Association. My mother was the type of woman that had a lot of compassion for people that surrounded her. I'm speaking of the neighbors. I think that that was probably one of the causes of her death. She finally died of a heart problem. She had had what they called at that time double pneumonia. Generally, when you got double pneumonia the chances of your coming out of it were very poor. Much of her sickness was due to her desire to help other people. They used to get her up at all hours of the night when somebody in the neighborhood became ill, somebody was having a child, or somebody was beating his wife, or whatever. Mother used to be called and she used to get up there and try to help them with whatever problems they had. She was always involved. She was concerned for the welfare and existence of the people in the neighborhood. I think that that in itself contributed to her death as a very young woman, because she died in her 40s. My father was the same way. As I said, he showed his interest in the welfare of other people by becoming involved, not being intimidated or allowed to be intimidated or afraid to become involved, to break out of the

situation that we had. Certainly, they were quite strict with us, no question about it. In fact, at that time I thought that he was overly strict with us. But when I grew up and became a man I realized that what he had done was certainly in the right direction. For example, we lived down there in South El Paso along the canal. Generally we had little gangs of boys running around and getting into trouble. But he wouldn't allow that at all. If he ever caught us even across the street he would give us a good horse whipping and we would never forget it. He was very, very strict in that sense. Then, trying to break out of that situation, instead of sending me, for example, to school close to where we lived, he and my mother made the sacrifice and sent me to St. Mary's School. St. Mary's School was out of the South El Paso district--north of the tracks. It was very interesting because at one time myself and another young man were the only Mexican Americans in that school. So we had a rough time. But, he [my father] worked hard and worked long hours. I think that the combination of both my father and my mother--their concern with the development of the family and the welfare of people--had quite an impression upon me and upon my life. It incited me that maybe I should make some contribution.

M: Do you recall any experiences in your elementary school education that had significant influence in your life?

T: I think that the fact that my parents made the sacrifice to send me to a school, as I said, north of the tracks had quite a bit of influence in my future life, because I think that it helped me to understand other people and develop in areas which would have been rather restricted to me if I had stayed in my own area and went to school in my own area. I



don't mean to be critical of the schools. On the contrary, I think that we had some good schools. But I think that this was, again, probably another first, another way of breaking that ice--to have the opportunity to associate with those people that possibly were discriminating against us. Like I said, it wasn't easy when I went to school at St. Mary's because I think there were only two of us who were Spanish-speaking. That was a little bit of a problem there. It generated many fights.

M: Do you recall the source of those fights?

T: Well, the source was that my name was Telles and I guess those people weren't really accustomed to being associated with Mexican Americans. So one thing led to another and before we knew it, why we were in a back alley having a fight. We had many fights. I remember I became involved in singing in the choir there at the Immaculate Conception Church, and I became an altar boy there. I guess this was part of my whole education. My parents certainly encouraged me, pushed me, into those things, because I think probably I might not have. When you're that young you're a little bit leary, a little bit bashful, backward in becoming involved. But they did; they pushed and I became involved in as many functions as possible. I think this again was in some ways a break that probably my father was also looking for--not only giving us a better education, but also that break which he felt was needed to open up the way for our people. He never believed that because we were of Mexican ancestry that we should be confined to a particular small area in El Paso. He felt that we belonged to the community and we should be a part of the every day life of the community, not just in our own little area. So I think that that was a very significant goal. My father

never said that this was it, but looking back I'm sure that because of his involvement in such things that it was evident that this is what he was looking for.

M: Was your father unique, an exception to the rule in this community?

T: I think that he was very much unique because very few actually provided that kind of leadership. Many of these people followed him because he showed these traits of leadership and [was] not afraid to go ahead. There were others, of course, that developed too--other leaders later on. But I think primarily it contributed considerably to improving the situation.

M: Do you have any personal explanations of why your father did not fit the norm in the Mexican community?

T: Well, he fitted the norm all right.

M: In his attitude, I mean.

T: His attitude, as I said, was that he felt that there was no reason why the Mexican Americans should be confined to a restricted area and to a restricted life, as it were, in the community. He felt that as members of that community, we were entitled to enjoy the privileges and the rights that were afforded any other member of the community. When he went off in business--I don't remember because I wasn't born yet--he started out this transfer business with a little buggy and a horse. That's the way he started out. But he was not afraid to venture. This I think was important. He was not afraid to venture, and he went into this other element which was not a very easy task. But he was willing to take a chance, he was willing to venture into this new world as it were, and he did.

M: I think that's extremely important there, the willingness to try something new, to take a chance, to gamble even though you might fail. What is the source of that kind of value system, that kind of behavior, that your father had that he obviously passed on to you? Do you have any ideas?

T: I think this is an individual value that comes with a person's understanding of the situation--a person desiring to do something about that situation. I suppose that I could have been a businessman; I suppose I could have been a professional of some kind. But, I felt that in this kind of business--political business, this public life business--was the way that I could best contribute to that goal, and I think that my father certainly felt that way, too. My daughter, for example, is now doing graduate work at Boston University. She's hoping to get a doctorate in Clinical Psychology. She graduated from Smith College and now it's going to take five years to get that doctorate. Well, she's been in the program about a year and a half. The point I'm getting at is this: I actually tried to discourage my daughter from going into that field because I think it's a very difficult field, dealing with problems of people. I've been through it. My mother went through it. I just felt that it was a tremendous responsibility--it's not the easiest. So consequently, I suggested to my daughter, "Why don't you go into law? I'm sure you could make a good lawyer." But her response was, "Daddy, no. I feel that in this particular profession, I can help my people much better. After all, I feel very strongly about that." So whether she inherited it from me or my father or whatever, she still has it. That's what she wants to do. So I said,

"Honey, if that's what you want to do, then go do it." And that's what she's going to do. I hope that someday she'll be in a position to do so. As a matter of fact, in Boston there's very few people of Spanish ancestry who are available to help the Puerto Ricans that are there, or the few Spanish people that are there. So in addition to her studies and the work that she has to do in the hospitals and all that, she has become quite involved in helping this group of Spanish-speaking people in Boston. They're always calling on her because, as I said, there's very few people of Spanish-speaking extraction or ancestry that can handle that situation. She's out there, sometimes in the middle of the night, helping people in the areas that I would very definitely call not very safe. I just quiver and fear when I think about where she is. But, that's what she wants to do, so...

M: What about your other daughter?

T: My other daughter is at Duke University. She's in her third year. I think she's another young lady who wants to help people, but she feels that the area that she can best help people is in the education field. She was doing the same thing in Durham, North Carolina. She was helping teach some Spanish-speaking youngsters English--youngsters that were getting ready to go to school and [whose] proficiency in the English language was very poor. So, she became involved in that. I'm very proud of them because of their desire to help human beings, to help other people. I doubt, like in my case, they'll ever be rich or wealthy. I certainly have never accumulated any kind of a fortune or wealth, but I think that

the satisfaction that comes with this whole thing is certainly something that to me is very valuable. So that's just why I said what I did a few minutes ago--that if I had to do it over again I would do the same thing, except possibly intensify my efforts.

M: Sir, let me ask you a question or two about one final topic. At an early age did you feel a need to achieve? Was that part of your own behavior?

T: Certainly I think that every individual has a certain desire to achieve, a certain desire to succeed. Sometimes an individual will set his objectives to do two things: not only to reach his own goals or his desire for prominence in any particular field, but, secondly and probably most importantly, he feels strongly enough about it--and doesn't care about becoming rich or wealthy--that he can contribute considerably to the welfare of other people who can't help themselves. So I think that is quite an incentive for anyone that really wants to become involved.

M: In connection with this question, one often hears from Anglo Americans, as an explanation for Mexican Americans who have gone on to achieve important positions, that the reason they have is because they have assimilated into the Anglo American way of life to a significant degree. In that they find the reason for the success and they tie it with some of the values that are popularly associated with Anglo Americans--the Puritan ethic, the work ethic, for example. What are your feelings about that explanation in view of your own experience?

T: I think very definitely that you have to assimilate up to a degree, in what you would consider "the other life." I think you have to

if you're going to have any kind of success or achieve your goals; there's no question. By the same token, that doesn't mean that you can go along without recognizing where you came from, who you are and certainly be proud of your culture, your history as a member of a race, or an ethnic group or whatever you want to call it. I think that's very important. I think the ability to assimilate, but at the same time being able to appreciate where you came from and who you really are, [is] very important.

M: Is there enough in our heritage, in our background, in the Mexican culture that provides a significant influence for individuals to develop a need to achieve--an attitude of developing work habits that put one on the track toward that achievement aside from the influence that one gets from the Anglo American society? What I'm getting at here is that many Anglo Americans put the blame on the Mexicans themselves for not being willing to take on values of the Anglo American society, and they assume that in the Mexican society the work ethic is not as prevalent as it is in the Anglo American society. What are your feelings about that?

T: I think that I can understand what they're trying to get at. Again, going back to the assimilation, I think that you have to assimilate. But by the same token, I think that it is very important to recognize the fact that you do have a background, a culture and a history that you can be proud of without negating the fact that you come from that. To get back to your question, I think it is not so much the fact that it is our fault. I think that the fact is that over the years when you consider the fact that this country will be 200 years old next year, the existence of our ethnic group--the existence of what I would call an assimilated

Spanish ancestry into the prevailing world of the Anglo--is new. I think that you have to consider the fact that other than those that came to Texas--for example, like my great-great-grandparents that came from Spain--most of the people that have come, have come from the south--México. It's been very difficult for them to assimilate, not only because of the language barrier but because of customs and ideas and methods of doing things. But I think that basically there are two things that we have to do: I think that we have to become much more involved in the every day life of our communities; in other words, participate more in improving the living conditions of our communities. I think that we have to become involved in the political life of this country, not only as voters and campaigners, but also as political candidates. I think that that's very important. As a matter of fact, even if we don't become candidates, I think that a candidate of X-name recognizes that there is a potential voting power in a certain group. That in itself will tend to improve the life of that particular group. So I think it's very important that we should become involved. I think that it's very important that we should become involved in the economic life of the community. In other words, become more involved and participate in business--in the economy of our every day life. But one factor which is very important and I think developed after World War II is education. We have to encourage and do whatever we can to help our people, particularly our children; to get the best education possible. The opportunities could be many, but if you're not prepared and you're not qualified, then there's nothing you can do about it. So I think very definitely they have to have their education; I think they have to have

participation in the every day life of our community, involving not only civic opportunities but also economic opportunities. Look back as far as UTEP. When I was a youngster when I started going to UTEP, the number of Mexican Americans attending the University were a handful; there were not too many. Look at it today: I don't know, but off hand I would guess that probably 50% of the students are Mexican Americans.

M: 35% to 40%.

T: You see, that's a pretty significant number. I think that World War II...we don't like wars and we don't like the results of wars at times, but I think that in many cases wars have made some contribution to the betterment of certain groups. And I think that that was an opportunity for us to improve.

M: Just this question that intrigues me, and I've been asking the other interviewees about it. Do you think that there is anything in the Mexican culture, in the Mexican value system that impedes the development of a positive attitude toward hard work and progress?

T: No, I don't think so. I think that that's just a story because I don't agree with that, especially in the younger generation. I'm speaking of my own generation. Prior to that I would say that the majority of people, like I said before, came from México. I suppose that those people that came from over there from a different culture, a different idea of how to approach a situation or solve a problem might have given people the idea that they were people of not too much concern or easy living and so forth. But I think that certainly in my generation, and I know in your generation, for example, I think you'll find this different. I don't think that the fact that you come from Mexican ancestors has anything to do with whether or



not you succeed or whether or not you have the energy or the desire or the willingness to push ahead, if that's what you mean. I don't think there is. I find, particularly in the young people today, [that] they're just as hard working or probably more hard working and more desirous of succeeding than people of other ethnic groups.

M: There is a stereotype from the Anglo side of it.

T: Unfortunately. They stereotype the so-called Mexican showing him sitting in the corner with a big hat over his head. That's not fair because I don't think that even at that time...it wasn't the fact that the Mexican, because he came from **México**, was lazy or had no desire or ambition. I don't think that that was it. I think that he was restricted by a different culture, by a different language, by coming into a different situation, a different setting of circumstances. I think that's what it was. But I think that as our young people assimilate without forgetting their ancestry, without forgetting their culture and their history that more and more every day the ambitions and the goals and the methods of approach and the energy put into it are the same as anybody else. I'll make a prediction here; whether it's a good one or a bad one I don't know. I think that we have come a long way in the political field. As you know, today we have two Mexican Americans as Governors of two states--Jerry Apodaca in New Mexico and Raúl Castro in Arizona. We have many, many, many people in political life in many communities. I foresee many more members of Congress here in the next few years. We don't have enough; we should have many more by now. But what I'm getting to now in the prediction--I hope you don't laugh at me--

I wouldn't be surprised at all if in the next administration (national administration) that we may have a member of the Cabinet of Spanish ancestry. I think it's time. I think we have the element. I think we have the experienced and qualified people now that we can look to. When I started out back as a County Clerk, that was like reaching for the moon. Reaching for the Mayor's office was like reaching for the moon. To be Ambassador was quite an accomplishment, not just to me but to the other Ambassadors of Spanish ancestry, Congressmen, and so forth. What I'm trying to illustrate to you [is] that we have come a long way and we're not indifferent or lazy as some people would like to picture us or stereotype us. I think that much has been accomplished. I wouldn't be surprised at all [that] in the next Cabinet the possibility of a Spanish-speaking member is very real. Whether that's important or not, I don't know.

M: It's very important to have a person that high.

T: But the fact is that we measure, a lot of times, not only the success of an individual or of people and certainly we measure the assimilation and the acceptance of people on those terms whether we like it or not--in terms of political life, in terms of the economic life and industrial life of a country, for example. So, as I said, I know people will probably laugh at me and think that I'm day-dreaming, but I think that is possible.

M: What Department would you venture to say that person would occupy?

T: Well, it would be very difficult. I think it would all depend upon the circumstances, on the situation, on the individual, on the President. But certainly one that I would like to see, of course,

would be HUD or possibly HEW, even though HEW is the largest; but why not think in terms of the most important? But seriously, I honestly believe that that's possible. I think that's coming because I think it's time. I think that our people have developed to that point where I think consideration should be given to that, whether it's important or not..or that important. Maybe some people may not think so, but I think it is because it's a sign of progress; it's a sign of improvement; it's a sign not only of acceptance but of acceptance of our qualifications, acceptance of our potential and acceptance of our capabilities. This is what I think is also very important.

M: Thank you very much, Commissioner Telles, for a very interesting and stimulating discussion. Hopefully we can continue this interview at a future time.

T: Mr. Martínez, you know that it's always a pleasure. I've enjoyed sitting here and chatting with you. I'm not so sure that I've given you what you want or whether I have really been articulate enough to provide you with the information that you're seeking; but certainly in the future, if I can be of additional help, I'll be more than happy to oblige.

M: Believe me, this is very valuable information that you've given me. Thank you.