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Oral History Interview with Thomas Graham

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United States special representative for Arms Control, Non-Proliferation, and Disarmament.

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Thomas Graham

United States of America

Oral history interview conducted by Michal Onderco in person, in Reston, VA on 22 March 2017

Michal Onderco:

And thank you very much for your willingness to talk to me.

Thomas Graham:

Sure.

Michal Onderco:

I want to start by asking a very general question. Could you please situate yourself in the delegation? How did you become involved with the dossier?

Thomas Graham:

With ?

Michal Onderco:

The NPT review conference.

Thomas Graham:

With the 1995 conference? Well, of course, the United States was always very interested in and closely followed nonproliferation policy generally, and the Nonproliferation Treaty in particular. And we were instrumental, in fact one of our lawyers, did the first draft of it, back in the '60s, 1960s, and so we've always been very closely involved with it.

And for many years - many decades - there was an organization in the U.S. government, very closely associated with the State Department, our offices were in the State Department building, called the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, ACDA as it was known as. And it was founded by President Kennedy, and it was destroyed, essentially, by Senator Jesse Helms during the Clinton administration using blackmail as to the ratification of the CWC. If you want the CWC, you have to merge ACDA with the State Department, and that's what happened. So, it disappeared -- formally disappeared, on April 1st, 1999, and of course all of those capabilities largely disappeared in the State Department, eventually.

And if ACDA had not existed in the 1960s, there wouldn't have been an NPT, because its director in the 1960s was the only official in the U.S. government arguing in favor of negotiating a nonproliferation treaty as the United Nations had requested. All the other agencies supported the multilateral force arrangement with France and Germany, having possession of nuclear weapons, but in a multilateral arrangement. And the State Department, Defense Department were very strong for that, and the only voice against was William Foster, the then-director of ACDA. And President Lyndon Johnson was eventually persuaded by him, and him alone. And his general counsel was the drafter of at least the U.S. first draft.

And so, that's the agency I worked for, and eventually became acting director, general counsel, Ambassador for Disarmament, and so on. And I worked there for 27 years. And ACDA ACDA, as an agency, always had a very close relationship with the NPT, and usually had the inter-agency lead in anything connected with it, like

organizing the Review Conference delegation, whatever.

And so, ACDA had the lead in preparing for the 1995 conference. And I was -- during the year 1993, I was the acting director for the whole year. The Clinton administration didn't appoint anybody, and I was the highest-ranking officer still remaining from the Bush administration. And we had a big inter-agency battle over whether the agency would continue. We survived that time, and other issues such as the test ban.

And finally, after we had prevailed as an agency that would continue to exist, at the end of the year, President Clinton appointed John Holum as the director, as the new director, and he was confirmed right at the end of the year. So, he arrived at ACDA, and was going to be sworn in in a few days. And he asked me to come see him, and he said, "We think you've done a great job here. You can have anything you want, except my job, of course. And you can have deputy director, you can have Ambassador for negotiations, or anything else."

And I said, "Well, I would like to be the Ambassador for negotiations. And I would like my first assignment to be to lead the U.S. government efforts to make the NPT permanent." And he said, "It's yours. You just have to get the Senate to approve you." And the Senate did approve me, and that's how I became associated with it.

Michal Onderco:

When was the plan for the campaign made? Or how was the plan for the campaign made?

Thomas Graham:

Well, I don't mean to sound self-centered, but it was entirely conceived by me.

The reason was that in 1993, when I finally was designated for this job, I wasn't confirmed until the middle of '94 by the Senate, but I was acting in that capacity beginning in December of '93, at that time, it was two years away. And most agencies weren't paying a lot of attention to it, had other things taking up their time and their energy, and it was a vacuum. And somebody had to have a plan, so it ended up being me.

And I decided that even though most people at the time thought that -- in fact, everyone I spoke with, thought that permanent extension was impossible, given the opposition from the Third World countries who were an overwhelming majority of NPT members, and remember, it was a majority vote of NPT members. But I said, "Well, I don't care what people think. This is important to the United States, and we're going to just take the position that we want a permanent extension, indefinite extension as we called it, and we won't vote for anything else, and we won't support anything else."

And that was my plan. And my plan was: I should add, there's another element to it. So one, no compromise on indefinite extension, under any circumstances. Outvoted - yes, but no compromise. And second, I didn't want to work with the disarmament ambassadors in Geneva at the Conference on Disarmament. I'd done that before, you know, they tend to help each other as opposed to necessarily represent what their government really wants, at least a lot of them do, in my opinion. Or did, I don't know about now, but then I thought they did. I thought at least a number of them did. And I much preferred to work with the representatives in New York, who had a broader mandate.

And beyond that, I thought it would be much better if I actually went to the capitals of

all these countries and talked to the people who made the decisions, and try to persuade them. Because they were the most important, obviously, people to have on your side. And I found that that was a good thing to do, because, number one, I was talking to the real policymakers: deputy foreign ministers, foreign ministers, under-minister for disarmament, whatever it might be in a particular country.

Usually it was the deputy foreign minister, although, it was foreign minister in some of the smaller - a lot of the countries, but not all of them. And so, that was advantageous.

And second, most countries seemed to appreciate the effort, that I made the effort to go there. And some countries behaved like nobody ever came to see them. I remember when I was in Kenya, I went to Kenya, to ask them for their vote, and we had a very good discussion with the Foreign Ministry. Then the next day, I arranged to visit Jomo Kenyatta Hospital, because they had nuclear equipment there from the IAEA. And one of my arguments was, "You want this to continue, don't you? So, you need a permanent treaty to underlie that."

And so I went to see the equipment. And that was headlines in all the papers, like nobody had ever been there before. I mean, I'm not saying that's true, but certainly was a big news item. And I experienced that in a number of [countries]-- not all, of course, but in a number of countries. And I think that, to some extent, we succeeded because a lot of the smaller countries gradually were persuaded by various efforts, but partly that effort, not to be part of a monolithic nonaligned movement vote, but to cast their own vote.

If I may just add one more thing, the NAM in those days was run a little bit like - I don't know, people won't like me saying this, but I'm going to say it anyway - it was run a little bit like the Soviet Politburo. In other words, it was run by the previous chairman, the chairman in office, and the next chairman, the chairman-designate. Those three ambassadors determined what the position was going to be, and they didn't take much argument against what they wanted.

And once the decision was made, no country dared to go against the NAM because they were afraid of retaliation. So, that's why it was important to talk to them -- one reason it was important to talk to individual countries.

Michal Onderco:

Was there something that you would offer these countries in return for their vote?

Thomas Graham:

Well --

Michal Onderco:

Or for their commitment?

Thomas Graham:

Usually, I appealed to their -- what is the Abraham Lincoln's phrase? "The better angels of our nature." I mean, isn't this best? I mean, don't we want a permanent arrangement preventing nuclear weapons from spreading? But - I did point out that this is something the United States cares a lot about, and if you want to stay on our good side, you'll listen to what we're saying.

And also, as I've mentioned with respect to the Jomo Kenyatta Hospital, some countries I emphasize that, you know, that the NPT doesn't govern just power

reactors, there's nuclear medicine and other uses of nuclear technology. And if that's going to continue indefinitely, or even if your power program is going to continue indefinitely... I mean, it takes a long time to build a reactor, and they deliver power for 40 or 60 years, and they're governed by safeguards from the NPT, if we're uncertain every 10 or 20 or 30 years whether the treaty is going to survive, that's not a good thing for your use of peaceful nuclear technology, whether it's a power reactor or nuclear medicine or what have you.

So, that was another -- those were the two arguments, three arguments that I made.

Michal Onderco:

You already mentioned that at the third PrepCom, it already looked like, "This is not going to go well," and the treaty would not be extended indefinitely. How did you stem the tide? What were the main steps that you did to sort of start?

Thomas Graham:

I commend you on your questions, because you're asking all the right questions to understand how it happened. Well, I knew the P5 were, except I was very unsure about China. China never did take a position, they just said they hoped for a smooth extension, that's all they would say publicly, and even, really, privately.

But I was sure of the other four. Other three, make it four with the U.S., and Germany was with us. So, those five countries worked closely together, and Japan was very much on our side. And Australia was a very energetic supporter. They were part of what was known as the Troika, in the U.N. Every year the three countries offered the resolution on stopping nuclear tests, Australia, New Zealand and Mexico, every year. And they considered themselves somewhat of a leader in nuclear disarmament/nonproliferation policy, but still very much part of the West.

In other words, Mexico had the same view of itself. Indonesia had the same view of itself, but they were not in our camp. Australia was, and I don't know how many Australians you know, but they tend to be very energetic people.

And so anyway, that was sort of a core group. And then fairly early on, NATO [and] most European countries supported indefinite extension. But by the spring of '94, there still were only about 50 of 60 that did support indefinite extension. So, early on, in '94, I sat down with my assistant, I only had one, and her name was Susan Burk, and she later inherited most of the job that I had just retired, and we remain close friends. And she was a wonderful, wonderful assistant to have, and wonderful partner to have. And I said, "You know, we've got to sort of prioritize here, and who are the principal leaders in the various regions?"

Obviously, I was planning to go to those countries, obviously South Africa in Africa, or, at least, to southern Africa. And Egypt in the Middle East, was very important. Colombia in South America. The most recent NAM chairman before Indonesia, who was then the chairman. Indonesia - we did talk with them.

And so, I developed a list of countries to visit, and you know, which ones first, which are the higher priority than some of the others. But I would try to cover really as many countries as I could. And I don't remember -- I often say I think the number of countries I visited in that two-,three-year period was 57, but I'm not really sure; it's somewhere up in that range. And some of them many times, [eg.] Egypt - it was a big, big problem in this process. And, you know what they think about nuclear weapons in the Middle East and Israel, and that's the problem. And so, I tried very hard to try to meet at least some of their demands. Desires, they weren't demands. Well, they were almost demands [laughs].

Michal Onderco:
I'll get back to Israel.

Thomas Graham:
Anyway, that was how I tried to divide up the world as to where my priorities should be, and which countries I should try hardest to influence.

Michal Onderco:
One of the countries you mentioned was South Africa. And as late as the fourth PrepCom conference, South Africa was very strongly in favor of rolling extension. And then by the time of the conference, South Africa switched to the camp of the indefinite extension.

Thomas Graham:
But with a catch.

Michal Onderco:
With the principles and objectives?

Thomas Graham:
Yes.

Michal Onderco:
Is that a catch?

Thomas Graham:
Well, that wasn't something we were arguing for. They said -- I don't know how much of this story you want to hear.

Michal Onderco:
You can tell me the whole story.

Thomas Graham:
Well, I don't want to use up, you know, too much of your tape. But early on, I knew South Africa was really important. I mean, it's obvious?

Michal Onderco:
Yeah.

Thomas Graham:
Only non-nuclear country that had had nuclear weapons. Nelson Mandela was its president, and it was going to be the next chairman of the NAM. I mean, it doesn't take much thinking to figure that out. So, I went to see them early on.

And I wanted to have a communication to them first. I wanted to get a communication to President Mandela about how important that we thought indefinite extension was. And so, I consulted the South African Office of the African Bureau of the State Department, who in the United States might President Mandela listen to? And they said, "Well, we think there are two people, Henry Kissinger and Colin Powell." Well, at the time, I didn't know Henry Kissinger, but I did know Colin Powell. So, I thought, "Well --" He was then out of office. He came back, obviously, but yeah, he was then out of office, but he wasn't completely out of office, he still had a big

staff. And you couldn't just call him up, you had to make an appointment to call him.

And so, I did finally call him. I mean, I did call him, and then I did finally get my appointment, I mean, I did seek an appointment to call him. Finally, it came through after a couple weeks, and so I called him, and I said, "General Powell, as perhaps you know, I'm leading U.S. government efforts to make the Nonproliferation Treaty permanent. South Africa is key to this campaign. We would like to communicate to President Mandela, and later on, I'm going to go there. And I consulted with the State Department, and they suggested that you were one of two people in the United States who President Mandela might listen to. And so, I'm calling you to ask you if you would write a letter to President Mandela. I'd be happy to do a draft for you, but of course it would be your letter."

And he said, "Who is the other one they suggested?" And I said, "Henry Kissinger." And he said, "Well, I've made the big time at last."

[laughter]

So, anyway, it led to me doing a draft, him editing it somewhat, and it was his letter. And you know, in the U.S. government, as in most governments, I had to get interagency approval of that, even though it had been written by General Powell. I still had to get all the agencies, including the White House, to sign off on it. But since it was written by General Powell, no agency, except the White House, no agency would touch it. And even the White House didn't really change anything. So, we sent the letter. I don't know to this day what effect it had, but that was our first thing. And then --

Michal Onderco:

Do you know where could be a copy of that letter?

Thomas Graham:

Well, the State Department might have one. There's a picture in my memoirs of the thank-you note from General Powell, but - I don't know, I never saw it after it was sent. Or was ever told what President Mandela's reaction was. Presumably, he at least saw it. I mean, considering, who it came from.

But then I went there, and it was really, in a way, a life-changing experience. I went there with Susan [Burk], and the first day we were in the Foreign Ministry, discussing the issue, and then the second day they gave us a tour of their former nuclear weapon infrastructure. And they took us to the HEU plant, which was right next to their low enrichment facilities. It was a beautiful plant, but it was closed.

And then, they took us ten miles away, to Valindaba, that was Pelindaba, where the enrichment was. And they took us to a building there, it had something to do with their military. And they said, "All right, here's the room where we assembled the weapon. Look around you, nothing's changed." There's nothing there you wouldn't find in a school shop training young people to be engineers. And then, they showed us where they kept the weapons, and kept them in two pieces, and you could get an idea of their size, and how easy it would be to transport them.

And then, they gave us a little lecture about, "Now, the reason we're showing you all this is - you're the first Americans to see this - and we want to persuade you that these are simple nuclear weapons, these are gun-type weapons. We think -- we estimate 20 kilotons, and they're real easy to make. Almost any country can do it if they have the highly enriched uranium, and some sub-national groups could do it.

So, our message to you is, you don't need a big infrastructure like Iraq had, and watch out."

And so -- and then they also gave a lecture on their nuclear doctrine, which I won't go into, but it didn't make any sense.

[laughter]

Thomas Graham:

That's all I'll say about it. And so, I mean, that really persuaded me how dangerous proliferation could be. I mean --

Michal Onderco:

You told me already before that ...

Tom Graham:

There's one more piece to it, but you can ask your question.

Michal Onderco:

No, go ahead.

Thomas Graham:

Well, so then a few months before the conference, it would have been, I don't know, about a year after I was there, maybe ten months after I was there. The South African ambassador asked to see Director Holum and me, and he came to our -- we met in John Holum's office. And he said that, "After a long, exhausting internal debate with African" -- what's the party in South Africa?

Michal Onderco:

African National Congress?

Thomas Graham:

"African National Congress, officials on both sides of the debate, we came to a decision, a final decision was made by the Deputy President, Mbeki, we've decided that we will support you, but with conditions. We want to do it in a way that's unifying between First World and the Third World, not divisive.

Michal Onderco:

Yeah.

Thomas Graham:

"And we'll ask you to agree to things that will do that."

Michal Onderco:

And did you see the list of things already at the time?

Thomas Graham:

No, no, he just gave us a general idea.

Michal Onderco:

And who was the ambassador?

Thomas Graham:

I don't remember his name. It might be in the book.

Michal Onderco:

Was it Goosens?

Thomas Graham:

It was whoever was the ambassador in '95.

Michal Onderco:

Okay.

Thomas Graham:

Yeah, because this happened in maybe January '95. I knew we had it won then, once he came, because we were getting some other countries to change, and with South Africa supporting us, I didn't think we'd lose. I didn't know if we'd -- the President of the conference was very anxious that the decision be unanimous, or, you know, at least a parliamentary consensus decision. I didn't care, as long as we got what we wanted.

Michal Onderco:

Were you afraid of the vote, or were you confident that the vote would be still be in your favor?

Thomas Graham:

Well, what I used to say to countries' delegation, ambassadors, foreign ministers, deputy ministers everywhere was, "All we care about is winning by one vote, and we think in the end we can do that." And you know, at the beginning I was, of course, making it up, but by January I wasn't afraid of the vote anymore. I felt sure we could win it, because we had South Africa supporting us, we had Australia, very, very active. Japan was lobbying countries all over the world. We also worked very closely with France, and with their West African allies, and the French were very, very helpful. And so were a number of other countries, too. Canadians were very helpful.

Michal Onderco:

When I spoke to Ambassador Berdennikov, he told me about a meeting that you had at the --

Thomas Graham:

And let me just interject. I don't want to say the Russians weren't helpful, they were. They were definitely very helpful. And Sergey Kislyak who's here, was my opposite number. Berdennikov first, and then Kislyak, and we have remained very good friends ever since. So anyway, Berdennikov.

Michal Onderco:

Berdennikov told me about a meeting that you had at the conference, in the early days of the conference, where the plan was sort of made to have the resolution, and to have it tabled by Canadians. Can you tell me a little more? So, what was the motivation for it, and how the plan came about?

Thomas Graham:

Well, we -- the Canadian ambassador, Westdal was a good friend, and Peggy Mason before him, but I think he took over sometime in '94. I'll tell you a funny story about him, if we have time at the end. But he was a very good partner. He gave me a

bottle of whiskey after the vote, of Rebel Yell whiskey, I'm from Kentucky, and that's a big thing down there. I doubt if many people knew about it outside of Kentucky.

Anyway, he was a good friend, and he was willing to take on the role of the man with the resolution. And so, we began to work the problem, saying that we're going to have a resolution introduced, Canadian ambassador's going to do it, we want to get as many countries on the resolution, to demonstrate our strength at the conference. I think he introduced the resolution at the beginning of the third week, I think, maybe. Maybe it was the second week.

But most of them were gone, many of the delegations were gone the second week, because they had the Bandung Conference, and that's where the NAM made their last stand. And we persuaded two countries to stand up and resist the Indonesian declaration of what the NAM position was going to be. From the earliest days in doing this, everybody told me, and I came to understand, that we had to prevent at all costs a formal NAM position, because we couldn't beat that. So, two countries were persuaded to dissent.

Michal Onderco:
And which ones were these?

Thomas Graham:
They were South Africa and Benin, and Benin was delivered by the French.

Michal Onderco:
Oh, okay.

Thomas Graham:
That's why I say they were helpful [laughs].

When I say delivered, I don't want to take anything away from the ambassador from Benin. He was a courageous man, to do that, and it wasn't easy for him to do it. But I'm just saying, that the French were very helpful, because we didn't have the kind of relationship with Benin that would permit the discussion about doing that, but the French did.

Michal Onderco:
And did you have that type of discussion with South Africa?

Thomas Graham:
By that time, we didn't need to, because South Africa had already declared in their opening statement that they were going to support indefinite extension along with the principles, and enhanced review. And so we felt very confident that we had a good relationship with South Africa, and they would stand up to the NAM. They were the next chairman, after all. And the first day of the conference, I mean, technically the head of our delegation was Al Gore.

Michal Onderco:
Yeah, I know.

Thomas Graham:
And so, he made our speech, and after the speech we had a meeting between the U.S. delegation and the South African delegation, with Al Gore and Foreign Minister Nzo.

Michal Onderco:
Yeah.

Thomas Graham:
And they both said, "We want you to work closely together." They both said that. And we did, we did work with them. And they were strongly criticized at first for, you know, giving in to the capitalist -- evil capitalist West, and all that. But at the end, they were heroes even in their own country, and they deserved to be.

Michal Onderco:
I'll come back to the principles and objectives, but I want to come back to the meeting and to the Canadian resolution, and to the show of strength.

Thomas Graham:
I don't remember a lot about the meeting. I remember it happened, and I remember that, you know, we had several people there, but I don't remember a lot about it.

Michal Onderco:
But one thing that -- multiple attendees of the meeting confirm that it had taken place.

Thomas Graham:
Yes, it definitely took place.

Michal Onderco:
But most of them said the main motivation was that as the conference started, there was a very strong momentum against indefinite extension.

Thomas Graham:
I don't remember that. You know, it may have been there and I didn't realize it.

Michal Onderco:
Yeah.

Thomas Graham:
By the time the conference opened, we thought we had a clear majority on our side. We didn't know how many, for sure, but we were pretty sure we had more than half. And let's see, there were 178 parties, I think, then. And so, that meant, you know, just short of 90 votes. We thought we were there. And the only thing that made us uncertain were the, I guess, Indonesian plans, and to try to have a NAM resolution in the second week. Because it was the anniversary of the Bandung conference, and a large number of heads of delegation went there.

And we recognized that risk, and so -- and we recognized we could be defeated by a NAM resolution. But we thought we were going to be all right, with South Africa supporting us and then with Benin.

Michal Onderco:
The counter-proposals were put forward by the like-minded countries, and by Mexico.

Thomas Graham:
Well, that's Mexico. I mean, I could write a book about our relationship about Mexico.

But let me see if I have a picture in here. No, I guess it's at home. But Miguel Marin Bosch was the great thorn in the United States' side, or at least some people perceived. I thought he was a great guy, myself. And the Washington Post did... Well, let me just back up slightly and say, my view of diplomacy, and certainly my view of that process at that conference, was personal relationships are everything. I mean, everything! Not just something, they're everything. And so, the Washington Post ran this six-day article on the conference. Front page, every day, six days in a row.

Michal Onderco:
Wow.

Thomas Graham:
And the last -- the sixth issue was on the day the conference opened. And you know, it said, "Uncertain Outcome, Very Important," something like that in the headline. And then, it had a picture of Miguel and me, two separate pictures, and set up so it looked like we were ready to fight each other, you know. [laughs] And so I was in New York, of course, for the opening of the conference that day, and I was the floor of the General Assembly, and I saw the Mexican delegation not far away. And you know, that first day, first two days, a lot of the delegates were augmented by people from their capitals, in many cases foreign ministers. So, I went over to the Mexican delegation, and the first person I saw was the Foreign Minister. And I saw some others in the background, and I said, "Has anybody see the Post today?" And he winked at me, and said, "Oh, yeah, we've all read it." And then, Miguel comes up and he says, "Hey, Tom." He says, "Let's you and I stage a fight on the floor here, and we can be front page tomorrow."

Michal Onderco:
[laughs]

Thomas Graham:
Well, that's the kind of relationship I try to develop with everybody. And, in many cases, many of these individuals remain good friends, and are certainly good colleagues.

Michal Onderco:
But during the conference, many people remember ...

Thomas Graham:
Sorry, I didn't answer your question, though. You asked about the Mexican delegation, Mexican resolution. In my opinion, it wasn't really a serious effort. They didn't try to get votes for it. It was an alternative to ours, after ours. It had already been tabled, and we had 111 co-sponsors.

Michal Onderco:
Yeah.

Thomas Graham:
So, we had the majority. I went to Indonesia, sometime in February of '95, with the objective of trying to talk to the President, or at least Ali Alatas, the Foreign Minister, who's a longtime nuclear person, about the conference. And President Clinton signed a letter agreeing for the first time that the U.S. would support a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Southeast Asia. And I was instructed by the White House to deliver that personally to the President, or at least the Foreign Minister. And they wouldn't let me do that, and I saw the number-three guy in the Foreign Ministry. And he said

something like, "Well, we know that you're going to cave in at the conference, and it will have the rolling 25." And I said, "Well, we're not going to cave in. If we get outvoted, we get outvoted, but we're not going to cave in." He said, "Well, then it will be a very difficult conference."

So, when the Mexicans tabled their resolution, the White House sent the senior director for nonproliferation from the National Security Council, or had him involved anyway. And he strongly denounced in public the Mexican draft resolution, and sent the senior ambassador from the State Department to see what was the deal, and [too see] the [Mexican] President and try to talk him out of it. And they wouldn't let [laughs] him see him, Zedillo. He got the same treatment that I got in Indonesia.

Just a brief aside, one more thing about Miguel Marin Bosch. [laughs] He said once to me, he said, "You know, Tom," he said, "Mexicans really dislike Americans, you know?" "Yeah, I know that, Miguel." And he said, "Half the country is still outraged that you stole a third of our country 150 years ago, in the Mexican-American War. I'm one of those. The other half of the country is still outraged that you didn't take the whole country."

[laughter]

Thomas Graham:

"And Zedillo is one of those." [laughs]

Michal Onderco:

But many people remember that during the conference, Marin Bosch sort of, his activity declined.

Thomas Graham:

Oh, we tried to get him kicked off the delegation.

Michal Onderco:

Can you tell me more about those efforts?

Thomas Graham:

Well, there were two delegates we tried to get removed. One was the Venezuelan ambassador, who was removed, Taylhardat, we had a very difficult time with him. And after he left, Venezuela then came over to our side. I think he was removed before the conference. I think, not sure. And Marin Bosch [laughs] -- the White House lobbied really hard to get Miguel kicked off the Mexican delegation. And they said -- finally, Mexico agreed, "Okay, we will remove him once the conference is over."

[laughter]

Thomas Graham:

And they did, they made him Consul-General in Barcelona, which is, I think, a real prize in their [laughs] Foreign Ministry. And he later was Deputy Foreign Minister. He's a great guy, really great guy.

Michal Onderco:

How does it sort of -- how does it work when you try to have someone removed from a delegation?

Thomas Graham:
How do you do that?

Michal Onderco:
Yeah.

Thomas Graham:
Well, the Secretary of State talks to the Foreign Minister, or maybe one step down depending on relationships. Who knows who, and what kind of relationship we have with the country, and so on. You know, it's not always the Secretary of State to the Foreign Minister. If we have an easy relationship with a country, it might be somebody lower. But, you know, the way our relationship with Mexico, it's temporary; it's never easy. We're not really enemies, but they don't like us for a lot of reasons, and for probably good reasons.

Michal Onderco:
How was your relationship with Dhanapala?

Thomas Graham:
We became very good friends, and we still are, and I send him a Christmas card every year. He doesn't send me a Christmas card, but he sends me a letter or an email or something in response, and he's a wonderful man, really wonderful man. A true Third World diplomat, but also very dedicated to nuclear disarmament and nuclear nonproliferation.

At the beginning, he always used to tell me that what he cared most about was that we have a unanimous decision or parliamentary consensus. No public dissension, that's what he cared about. And he didn't think we could get that for permanent extension. And I said, "Well then, Jayantha, then I don't think you're not going to have your wish, because the United States will never vote for anything else." And so, gradually he came around to the view that, you know, with still about six months to go, I think I'm being accurate, that indefinite extension was inevitable.

And so, then his job now was how to make that a consensus decisions. It took a lot of work on his part, and other people's part, to make that happen, and it was a parliamentary consensus, it was not a unanimous vote by any means. And there was a very quick gavel he had, and then after the vote there were statements by countries on both sides. Some denouncing the decision, some supporting, that was part of the compromise.

Michal Onderco:
You already alluded to the fact that the Principles and Objectives that South Africa came up with were a price to be paid. When you saw the first draft to the document --

Thomas Graham:
And also the enhanced review.

Michal Onderco:
And the enhanced review, of course. What were the most problematic parts for the United States?

Thomas Graham:
Well, you're talking to somebody who strongly supports the end of nuclear testing,

and I was essentially the author of the moratorium in the U.S. Government in '93. So, I didn't disturb me at all to have the CTBT language in there, in fact, I liked it having it there. And I was accused after the conference of blackmailing the United States into supporting a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and I admitted to that in public. So, I mean, I - blackmailed is not the right word -but I positioned the United States in such a way that it became a national goal which is what it became under Clinton.

And so, I don't know, I don't remember anything in the Statement of Principles and Objectives that was a big problem for us. There may have been something. Iran gave us a little problem, that they had some language, some views on nuclear technology trade, and that did cause us some problems all along. And probably since they were part of the Presidential group, it probably came up in that group as well.

Michal Onderco:

But you were a part of the presidential group as well, right?

Thomas Graham:

Yes, yes, we were.

I have to tell you that I was not allowed by the White House to meet with the Iranian Ambassador alone, you see. And, so if I wanted to meet with him, and I needed to meet with him because of this issue, I would have to ask the British, or the French, or the German ambassadors to have lunch. An EU lunch, and invite both of us and they would sit at the end of the table and he and I would sit opposite each other, and do our business.

And I didn't have a bad relationship with him, he was a professional, a good professional and I don't -- we really didn't have a big problem with him, or with Iran. Right at the end when we were about to vote on an indefinite extension, Iran had problems with -- I can't remember if it was the Statement of Principles or whether else, it must have been the Statement of Principles -- but they held up the vote for two hours because they thought something in there was too favorable toward the Peace Process. And I don't remember what it was.

But I do remember all of us, in fact there's a picture of us right there huddled around the Iranian Ambassador. We finally settled it and had the vote. So, that was a problem but that was really the only time. There were bigger, much bigger problems with Egypt, I mean, oh man those were.

Michal Onderco:

So, there goes my question where I was supposed to go now. I'll come to other points as well but the big question that I have if you had enough votes to push through the resolution by vote, why did you bother with the Middle East Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone?

Thomas Graham:

Well, because it became clear that Egypt, Syria, one or two other Arab states would publicly - wouldn't sit still for the consensus vote they would object...

Michal Onderco:

But you said that you wouldn't mind to have a vote. You said you wouldn't mind to have a vote, right?

Thomas Graham:

I, personally, didn't mind but I was trying to keep Dhanapala happy. And others that

had his view and it began by -- I went to Egypt early on, and it was the toughest diplomatic experience or one of the toughest certainly I ever had. I went there, I think it was April of '94, and I had Susan with me. Nabil Fahmy was Moussa's special assistant. He was Ambassador here for a long time and a good friend. And he says, as we were waiting to go in and see Moussa, he says to Susan, he says "Susan, what do you think you're doing, you Americans. You're proposing Catholic marriage for the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and we're not Catholics."

[laughter]

Thomas Graham:

And so, that got Susan a bit angry [inaudible]. And we went into Moussa's office and I sat right next to him and he was here and I was sitting there and Susan and Nabil, and maybe a few others were sitting in the back of the room. And I raised the subject of indefinite extension. And it was like pushing a button, I got the 30-minute, well that may be too long, a 15-minute denunciation of Israel and all its works and "enough nuclear weapons to destroy the whole middle east in 15, in well it wasn't 15 minutes, 5 minutes with the missiles to do it and we don't have a problem with the government there now (it was Rabin), we don't have a problem with the government there now but what guarantee can you give me that some crazy likudist like that man who killed the people at the mosque might come to power and launch a nuclear war. And what do I care about the NPT, I don't care if it's permanent or it disappears tomorrow. It doesn't do me any good unless you can do something about that arsenal there and we are not going to support indefinite extension, in fact we're going to oppose it unless you can get Israel to at least take a step in the direction of eventually joining the NPT as a non-nuclear weapon state".

So, from then on to the very end, it was a long effort in what can we get Israel to do? And in the end, the answer was nothing. I went there to talk to them, Secretary of State Christopher went there on this issue. And they were very polite, and ... State Department told me, you know, I needed a body guard if I went there, they, you know, just would be terrible. But you know they were that way, they were very polite and I had a very nice visit. Susan was with me and State Department watcher with me too, who I knew -- another woman.

But, I gave a speech at Tel Aviv University, I met with the Foreign Ministry and Defense Ministry and, basically, that was then. You know, we recognize how important this treaty is to everyone including us but we just can't sign on to anything as long as we have Iraq and Iran out there, it's just too dangerous.

But let me just finish, and so I came away from [Egypt] feeling all right but not very optimistic. And when I got to Jordan, we, at first made, a speech in the evening to their Council on Foreign Relations. And it was tumultuous people jumping up denouncing Israelis and denouncing the U.S., it was really. And Susan and Libby was the name of the -- I forget her last name now -- the State Department official, and it was not so nice. And so, we thought we'd get the same treatment the next day from the government, and the relevant official for us to meet with was the Special Assistant to the Crown Prince, named Abdullah who was.

So, we -- about 10:00 the next day, we went over to where his office was, it was on the, I think second floor, imposing-looking the building, and finally we were ushered over to where he was. And he was in a conference room and it was a long table and he was sitting in the middle and there were two generals, or what appeared to be Jordanian generals, both frowning at us. And all three of us thought we're going to really have a tough time, it will be Moussa all over again, and like last night.

Michal Onderco:

[laughs]

Thomas Graham:

[laughs] So, we sit down and Abdullah leans across the table and he says, he says "Ambassador Graham, before we start our discussion, I just want you to understand how much I enjoy my summer home on Cape Cod." [laughs] And I knew it was going to be fun, and it was.

He says, "Our view is the Egyptians have it all wrong. We have to find a way to ensure Israel security before they are ever going to even consider giving up their weapons. And that'll happen after a long process." Well it's a long process and it still hasn't happened, but.

Michal Onderco:

So how did you manage to pursue the Egyptians give in, in the end?

Thomas Graham:

So, anyway, just one last sentence. So this long process that led to Middle East resolution, that was all we could do for Egypt. It was done for -- it was what we could do for Egypt and for Dhanapala in trying to get a consensus. And so, what was your question?

Michal Onderco:

How did you manage to pursue the Egyptians to believe in the resolution?

Thomas Graham:

[laughs] Well, we had a meeting the night before the indefinite extension took place. In the basement of the U.N. Building, and it was Madeline Albright was our Ambassador, myself, and Bob Einhorn, and Dhanapala in the chair, Nabil Fahmy was there for Egypt, there was a Syrian representative, and one or two other Arabs.

And we didn't have anything written down, but we had the concept of this resolution that we were talking about. And very important to Egypt and Syria was that those countries that hadn't joined the NPT yet, it would say -- the resolution would say we urge all urge countries to join -- all U.N. members to join the NPT. And they wanted it to say all U.N. members in the Middle East to join the NPT, namely Israel, Djibouti, Oman, and the UAE. And so, we were calling the Israeli mission every 30 minutes to keep them informed of what was happening.

And the Arabs, I mean, Syria and Egypt, in particular, were insisting that this had to be in there. The U.S. was, I was, trying to resist that because I knew it would upset the Israelis, they never agreed, you know they had no say, but they would cause problems so I was trying to find another way to go. Then the ambassadors from Oman, Djibouti, and UAE suddenly appear and they say we don't want to be named either.

[laughter]

And so, that cut the ground out from the Egyptians, and they were so angry that they, Nabil said "well we're just going to have nothing to do with it. We're not going to co-sponsor, we're not going to produce it or co-sponsor it. We won't vote against it, we'll sit still but we're not going to introduce that piece of trash without naming those countries." So, Dhanapala says, "Well don't look at me, I'm not going to introduce it."

And then, he looked at me and then he said, "Well, the depositaries," -- grasping for

straws -- "Well, the depositaries introduce it." And I said, "Well, speaking for the United States, yes, but I, obviously, can't speak for the British or the Russians but I know where their ambassadors are. I was supposed to be there too if I didn't have to be here. They are having a very nice dinner at a very nice restaurant. And so I know how I can reach them, so I'll call and ask."

So, I went over to this phone on the other side of the room, and I called up the restaurant and said connect me to the private room. And then, I asked for the British Ambassador and I told him what the situation was and he said, "Yes, yes, we'll co-sponsor." And then I got Sergey Kislyak on, and I said, "Sergey, will Russia co-sponsor?" And he says, "Well, I think so Tom, but I have to check with Moscow first." And so, we sort of ended there. And during the night someone wrote up a resolution based on what we had said.

With no naming of countries, and with the depositaries as the countries introducing it. And so, then, about 7:00 the next morning, I was having breakfast in the hotel room and I get a call from Sergey and he says, "Tom," he says, "Moscow says I can co-sponsor." So, I said, "That's great Sergey, that's terrific." "But there's a condition." I said, "What's the condition?" "Moscow says I have to read it first."

[laughter]

Thomas Graham:

So, anyway, that's how it happened and it went out there after indefinite extension, Statement of Principles and the Enhanced Review passed, those resolutions passed by, you know. You know, they had separate votes for each one. I propose such and such, I hear no objections; passed. That's about how it went, that's what the Iranian's were objected to, that's what it was. They didn't like some of the language in the Middle East resolution.

And we brought that up, it sounded a little weird after you know Dhanapala proposes these three things and then the depositaries propose something else. But that's how it happened and it's still with us as you well know.

Michal Onderco:

Were there, because some of the P5, of course, had some objection against the Test Ban Treaty

Thomas Graham:

Oh, yeah.

Michal Onderco:

Especially from France that was still continuing...

Thomas Graham:

Yeah, that became a big issue the next year.

Michal Onderco:

Was there an attempt to bring them in, somehow, on this issue?

Thomas Graham:

Well, the only thing that the Statement of Principles said was that it didn't bind anybody to test band, it just says that it would be the objective of the NPT parties to achieve a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in one year.

Michal Onderco:

Yeah.

Thomas Grant:

And it's the extension, the indefinite extension decision was a legally binding decision under international law. The other two were politically binding not legally binding --

Even though they're gladly understood to be the price and Dhanapala goes into that in his book on the conference. That they're you know, you violate them at your peril, if you care about the NPT. So, they weren't assuming a legal obligation and it was just an obligation to negotiate, so we never had any problem with them.

Michal Onderco:

You mentioned already there was an attempt to sort of decouple disarmament from nonproliferation, and that it was one of the goals that you wanted to sort of take them apart?

Thomas Graham:

Well, we wanted to decouple in the sense; we didn't want disarmament progress be a cloud over the existence of the NPT. We didn't want to downgrade the importance of disarmament it's that we didn't want some kind of disarmament schedule introduced by whomever, India, Indonesia, countries that have supported such things. The failure to achieve, I don't know, zero nuclear weapons by 2020, I mean, the NPT is gone. So, that was one we were very anxious to prevent, because we weren't sure how much disarmament progress was going to be made even though things were very positive in 1995. They quickly became not so positive as they often did.

Michal Onderco:

My question was more how did you see the balance between disarmament and nonproliferation in the Statement of Principles and Objectives?

Thomas Graham:

Well, the purpose of the principles and objectives was to bring it back in. But not make it a legal condition on the survival of the NPT. So, that was okay, we didn't have a problem with that.

Michal Onderco:

What did you expect -- what were your expectations from the enhanced review process?

Thomas Graham:

My expectations for the future?

Michal Onderco:

Yes.

Thomas Graham:

Well, I thought that that was a real turning point maybe. We had indefinite extension, we solved the problem with the French tests the next summer, and it was not easy. And the CTBT after a lot of maneuvering, thanks to Australia, was approved by the United Nations General Assembly 158 to 3, the three against were India, Iraq, and Bhutan. Didn't make India look so good. And, I mean in their opposition. And so, I thought it was a good chance to bring the test ban into force and we could make some real progress in the future. But that isn't the way it happened. The CTBT was

rejected by the U.S. Senate in '99, entirely for political reasons, nothing to do with the Treaty.

I went to see Senator Warner during that process, and he said that he was dismayed over the fact that the treaty was voted down. There were only two senators that wanted that to happen. Senator Helms and Senator Kyle from Arizona that they just -- but we couldn't approve it after the statement was made by the former Secretaries of Defense about verification and maintenance of the stockpile.

But he said, you know I have great admiration for Senator Warner, he's retired now, and I don't want to mischaracterize anything he said so this is just my recollection of what he said. He said that, you know, "If you could get a new statement from the former Secretaries of Defense that's more positive, maybe we could revisit this. I speak for 19 Senators on this issue because most senators never knew anything about the test ban, and so they look at just a few to take leadership positions. So if you could solve that problem then we could change this." But, essentially it was, I mean, it was a trap laid by Senator Helms to just wreck the treaty and he succeeded.

Michal Onderco:

Did you expect that the enhanced review process will turn the PrepComs into sort of mini review conferences?

Thomas Graham:

Yes, yes, because in the last week of the conference Foreign Minister Alitas came. By that time we were pretty confident - I think it was maybe two nights before the vote on extension. We were having a meeting in the U.N. building on something to do with the final outcome and everyone was milling all around. I was there with part of our delegation, and I was doing some milling. And sitting in chairs against the wall, not far away from me, were our representatives of Secretary of Defense and Chairman of Joint Chiefs, and one or two others.

And the Indonesian ambassador came up to me and he said, "We realize that indefinite extension is going to pass and we ask for just one concession from you, and we won't cause much of a problem if you can give it to us." And I said, "What's that?" And he said, and I don't remember where it was put, but he wanted a provision that made it clear that the issues in Statement of Principles and Objectives could be brought up during the enhanced review PrepComs. And I had no instructions on that, I had to decide right there, the Defense Department was right behind me. I couldn't consult with them, I mean, I had to decide right there. At first, I was hesitating and the Ambassador said, "Okay, come on Tom, give us a crumb." [laughs] And so, anyway. So, I said, "okay," and no one ever complained, no one ever mentioned and so it's clear that they were -- they would be mini RevCons if they have and they sort of had been.

Michal Onderco:

When the conference ended did you at the time expect that the treaty would welcome new members? Because at the time, there were still a few countries outside of the treaty.

Thomas Graham:

Well now it has everybody except the three, the four, how many is it? The four that have nuclear weapons. And I think South Sudan hasn't joined.

Michal Onderco:

[affirmative]

Thomas Graham:

And it didn't then, and number of countries joined right before the conference, so they'd have a vote. And some others, like Brazil, joined a year or two afterwards, and so, yes, I thought other countries would join and they did.

Michal Onderco:

Did you have at the time already hopes that maybe one of the four with nuclear weapons would join?

Thomas Graham:

Well, let me think now, that was '95. Well, North Korea was still in the treaty then, but I had no hopes. India, Pakistan, and Israel are never going to give up their nuclear weapons except in the context of the elimination of nuclear weapons or a nuclear weapon-free zone in their region, one or the other. Only in context like that, decided at the top of governments, will they do it.

Michal Onderco:

For two of the P5, this was the first conference, it was France and it was China. And you mentioned already with France the cooperation was rather good.

Thomas Graham:

Very good.

Michal Onderco:

How as the cooperation with China?

Thomas Graham:

Zero. No cooperation, no opposition but no cooperation either. They never would tell us what their position was, we never knew until the end what their position was. They -- we had a P5 meeting in Geneva in '94, and Ambassador Ho was then the Chinese Disarmament Ambassador -- I think that was his name, don't hold me to that, but that's my recollection.

The French Ambassador said, "Well now," we were having lunch, the French ambassador, Errera, very good friend; I really liked him. And he said, "Well now, Ambassador Ho, the others of us here we support NPT indefinite extension, what is China's position? We don't know what it is." And Ambassador Ho said, "Well, indefinite, that's a very good word, but we don't have that word in the Chinese language." That's what he said, and that was typical.

And, later, I think it was, I think it was early in '95, might have been late '94, the book would say -- but I think it was early '95, John Holum, the director back then, and I went to Beijing to discuss this issue with the Chinese. And we were joined by the American ambassador to China, a very distinguished guy, and we tried to get them to say something. We met with the vice minister for -- I don't know North America maybe, I'm not sure. And their Disarmament Ambassador, who then was a man by the name of Sha Zukang. And in the hallway, as I remember it anyway, Sha and I were talking when there was a recess and he says, "Well, I'll tell you: China thinks that five nuclear weapons states in the world is enough." And also, I guess, we were discussing North Korea, and why can't China, the perennial question, why can't China do more about North Korea? And he said, "Well let me tell you: we don't understand them any better than you." Yeah, right.

So, that's about as close as we go. And subsequently I asked in '96, I was in Jakarta, meeting with ASEAN on the South East Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty, they

were negotiating it and they invited the P5 to come and make presentations. So, I came and the other four also. And after my presentation we had a recess, and I struck up a conversation with the Deputy Singapore Ambassador, a woman, but I don't remember her name. And I told her about my problems with the Chinese and I said, "Why are they like that?" And she said, "Well, they're a little more open with us because they consider us part of Chinese civilization, but there's two reason why they are like that. First, it was the tradition during the empire that you know only the Emperor could make the decisions and you had to go there to find something out, the people in the field didn't have any authority. But that's a small reason. The real reason is -- the most important reason is China is deeply suspicious of the West. The United States in some ways is getting looked upon as the leader of the West and this isn't going to change so you might as well get used to it."

So, I said, "Why are they so suspicious of us? Was it the Korean War or Taiwan?" And they said, "Oh, no not at all. It's the Boxer Rebellion and the Opium Wars." [laughs] So, I knew it was hopeless then.

So, anyway, I was just talking with a very senior business person yesterday, and I told her the same story. And I said, "Well, you know, I don't have the diplomacy anymore, so I don't know if its still true, is it -- have you had that experience?" And she said, "Oh, yes, that's exactly the experience that I've had. It's really difficult to get them to tell us what their position is so we have to guess, most of the time. Sometimes they tell us, but mostly, most of the time, they don't."

And that's very difficult to negotiate with somebody if you don't know what -- if you have to guess what they really want, you may guess wrong. There's no doubt with the French and the Russians what they want [laugh] and so, I'm not saying it's easy with them but it's a lot better you know what they want, you know what you want and so you try to find some compromise.

Michal Onderco:

I want to ask my last question. Prior to the 1995 conference, there was a group of people who where meeting on both sides of the Atlantic and under the name of "Project for Promotion of Nuclear Non-Proliferation," the PPNN, Ben Sanders and --

Thomas Graham:

Oh, they were involved during the indefinite extensions process, too, very much.

Michal Onderco:

Were you involved with them, in touch with them?

Thomas Graham:

Oh, yes, yes, I used to meet with them frequently, in fact, very frequently. Every conference I went to, they were there, and I usually talked with them.

Michal Onderco:

And how did you see their effort?

Thomas Graham:

I thought it was helpful, you know they didn't think there was a chance for indefinite extension in the beginning. I remember I was at a conference in Venezuela talking to a couple of them in early '94, and I gave them my standard line, "Well, maybe it won't, but we're not going to vote for anything else under any circumstances. So, you know, if we're out voted that's what the treaty provides for a vote, so we'll accept that, but we're not going to change our position."

Michal Onderco:

Well you were quite confident about the vote --

Thomas Graham:

Well, at the very end I was. I mean, at least close to the end I became more confident. I mean, certainly early in '94, I wasn't confident because we only had 60 countries that were -- so, I became progressively more confident.

Let me say something. I wasn't trying to please Jayantha Dhanapala just because I liked him. But I wanted to keep all those countries that he was speaking for to an extent -- I wanted to keep them in the treaty, so I was doing it for the treaty. Not for Jayantha, as much as I liked him.

Michal Onderco:

There are some of participants who said that voting would be problematic because the treaty doesn't say whether voting should be open or close.

Thomas Graham:

No, it doesn't

Michal Onderco:

Some of them say that they sort of gathered that the United States was afraid that if it would allow for a secret vote, some of the pledged votes would not materialize.

Thomas Graham:

We had that concern, we didn't want a secret vote for that reason, I guess. I remember we had a big argument about the rules. Big, oh extended, lasted almost a year about what the rules would be for voting and just how they would work, and so on.

Michal Onderco:

So, if the voting were to take place, would you push for an open vote, under General Assembly rules?

Thomas Graham:

I forget what the rules finally provided, but I think -- I'm just guessing, but my recollection is that the vote could be secret but the countries should ask if it be made a public vote, and then there'd be some decision mechanism. I don't remember exactly, but it was something that we negotiated very carefully.

Michal Onderco:

And which were the countries would you be most afraid of that their support may vanish if the vote was secret? Would it be some of the NAM countries or would it be more?

Thomas Graham:

Certainly, it would be some of the NAM countries, it wouldn't have been South Africa, though they were very clear about what they thought was the right thing to do.

For some of the Latin American countries, maybe. Something I should mention here, just as an aside, Argentina joined the treaty not long before the vote, and they were great help. They had the zeal of the converted, and they were just wonderful. They really were. And I remember I went to a conference in Bariloche, and made about a

25-minute speech, most of which was long denunciation of Brazil for not joining - I think the Argentines really liked it.

[laughter]

Thomas Graham:

But anyway, I think, maybe, you know, some of the African countries, not in the south but further north, maybe some of the Latin American countries.

Michal Onderco:

Were you ever afraid of the support among the European allies of the United States?

Thomas Graham:

No, no, no. Well, I'll mention one country: Switzerland didn't agree to support indefinite extension until practically the night before the vote. But we all suspected that the reason for that was that the conference wasn't held in Geneva --

Michal Onderco:

[laughs]

Thomas Graham:

Or in Europe. So, we signed it off to that. But none of the others, no, they were all very positive. I can't think of any that weren't, no, I can't think of any that weren't.

Michal Onderco:

Is there something I should have asked about the conference, and I didn't?

Thomas Graham:

I think you covered all the major issues. I might just say a couple things.

Another group that was formed, but only after the '95 conference, as we got close to 2000, and some negative things had happened. I think -- I don't remember exactly the timing whether it was before or after the CTBT vote and the Indian/Pakistan tests in '98. And Russia changed to first-use doctrine from no first-use, I mean, their official doctrine. And so, there was some concern about the NPT last years of the decade, and that was called the New Agenda Coalition.

And they were very instrumental in the final document of 2000, which strongly supported '95. And that was very helpful and important because in 2005, the conference was a total failure and the Bush administration essentially instructed its representatives to reject the Statement of Principles and Objectives and disown everything we'd agreed to, and in 2010 it all came back. But -- I'm glad we don't have a conference coming up any time soon. And so, I just wanted to mention the New Agenda Coalition.

I thought Dhanapala was a very effective leader and did a good job leading the conference. His presidential committees was a real success, and even though the White House didn't like the membership - because Iran was in there and other countries - but he had the right people there. And shortly before the end, there was a meeting at the residence of the Australian ambassador involving largely the membership of the President's committee, maybe not all of them. The White House was somewhat upset that Iran was going to be there, and maybe I'll talk to them [laughs].

And, I had the impression that probably the Iranian Ambassador had the same instructions I did, that he wasn't supposed to talk to me alone either, because I certainly never had any pushback from him [laughs]. So, that was -- Butler was the name of the Australian ambassador, he was very vigorous, very effective. A lot of final decisions were made at this, maybe it was a dinner, maybe it was cocktails, I'm not sure exactly. But it was an evening meeting and some of the remaining issues that would be in the resolution, or the Principles and Objectives were resolved there. That was a very important meeting.

And I mentioned it, but the fact that South Africa and Benin objected to the proposed NAM position by Indonesia was very important. And I remember asking -- I think it was the deputy representative of Venezuela, early in the conference, after the NAM had announced their position on something, and he was sitting right in front of me, it was small room.

I tapped him on the shoulder and I said, "How can Venezuela support that, that's directly contrary to your interests as I understand them?" And he said, "Well you have to understand how the NAM works." You know, it's run by the three people I mentioned, former Chairman, Chairman, next Chairman. "And they don't have debates, they just announce what the position is and then a country opposes it, at their peril. So, we just let it happen even though, yes, you're right, it is against our interests, this particular position."

So, I don't know, I understand why the NAM was formed, and I'm not saying its influence was wholly bad, I don't think it was. But, certainly, by '95... I don't know. For one thing, there wasn't any -- no longer countries to be non-aligned between, because the Cold War was over. Why do we still have this organization? And on top of that, the way they operated was, you know, not I didn't think, terribly constructive. And they didn't operate effectively at the '95 conference, thank goodness, otherwise, we would have never prevailed, that was very important.

Michal Onderco:

So, that was probably good for you that they didn't operate.

Thomas Graham:

Oh, it was very good, yeah. And wholly, largely due to South Africa, but not 100 percent. Benin was important, but there's some other countries to that helped.

Michal Onderco:

Thank you very much for your time.

Thomas Graham:

My pleasure.

[end of interview]