

## FOREWORD

### Transcript Warning:

All written transcripts are imperfect abstracts of spoken conversation. Variations in sound quality and in the aural acuity of listeners can and do produce wide variations in what is heard. Even though transcripts may be prepared at great effort and with great care, many points of ambiguity are inevitable, and erroneous interpretations from transcripts are always possible. Therefore, to ensure full confidence in any and all quotations from the presidential recordings, users are strongly urged to check all transcript renditions against the actual tape recordings before publication.

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### Punctuation:

The following conventions are used throughout the transcripts:

- \* \* \*      To indicate a pause in the recording while the speaker listens to the person speaking at the other end of the telephone. Used when only one side of a telephone conversation is recorded.
- [ ?]      When the transcriber is not certain of what is said on the recording.
- . . . .      To indicate a sentence which the speaker trails off without completing it.
- . . .      When a speaker is interrupted before a sentence is completed.
- \_\_\_\_\_      To indicate the speaker's emphasis.
- [   ]      Used to enclose editorial comments of the transcriber such as /Meeting appears to be breaking up/ or /Several speakers speak at once and none of the words are intelligible./

### Names:

The first time a name is mentioned, the full name is provided whenever it is known. "JFK" and "RFK" are used for President Kennedy and Robert Kennedy, respectively. When the identity of a speaker is unknown, "Speaker?" is used; when the identification of a speaker is uncertain, a question mark follows the name. The heading of each transcript gives the names of all participants listed in the President's Appointment Books as scheduled to attend the meeting.

### Preparation:

These electronic documents were created from transcripts available in the audiovisual research room in the John F. Kennedy Library. The transcripts were scanned using optical character recognition and the resulting text files were proofread against the original transcripts. Some formatting changes were made.

## **Dictabelt 6B, Item 6B7**

December 17, 1962

[Skips throughout]

JFK: . . . to leave tomorrow morning to see the prime minister and this Skybolt matter is going to come up.

Eisenhower<sup>1</sup>: Yes.

JFK: I've been going through the pap- . . . [skips]. . . the agreement that, the agreement that . . . [skips]. . . uh, and I wondered if . . . [skips] . . . that I ought to know about that he might bring up. As, as I read the papers, uh, there was always the question of the feasibility of Skybolt.

Eisenhower: That's correct.

JFK: And that, uh, I think they feel . . . [skips]. . . We got two or three problems. First, that in the agreement we agreed on Holy Loch . . . [skips]. . . they may feel that one is for the other. It doesn't read that way, it doesn't read that way and, uh, it seems that they were separate decisions but made at the same time. What's your general fee- . . . [skips]?

Eisenhower: Well, now, of course, I'm shooting off the hip here.

JFK: Oh, I understand.

Eisenhower: But . . . [skips]. . . this about Skybolt looked so [word missing] at that time and . . . [skips]. . . was sure that it was going to be the answer to all the defensive . . . [skips]. . . Soviets. And on account of that, as I recall, . . . [skips]. . . very expensive type of . . . [skips]

JFK: . . . [skips] Well, then they stopped it . . . [skips] . . . of course Bluestreak. Remember their missile.

Eisenhower: Oh, yes, that's right.

JFK: Yeah.

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<sup>1</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower

Eisenhower: A missile.

JFK: Yeah.

Eisenhower: And so when we. . . I think you're absolutely correct that . . . [skips]. . . for that as far as, uh, as a base up on the side . . .

JFK: Right.

Eisenhower: . . . was concerned. It wasn't that at all. There were two . . . It wasn't that at all. There were two separate things that we . . . [skips]. . . we did, as I remember, ah, put in the caveat that . . . put in the caveat that, of course, the Skybolt still . . . [skips]. . . prove itself, still . . . [skips]. . . prove itself . . . [skips]. . . was that now as I read . . . now as I read from the, ah, newspapers . . .

JFK: Sure.

Eisenhower: . . . is that . . . [skips]. . . the damn thing just hasn't . . . [skips]

JFK: Well, it had these five [failures?]. We put in about 3-, we put in about 300 million, they say to get the 1000 missiles that by the time we would . . . [skips]. . . more in of, more in of, uh, experimental money. Then if we brought the 1000 . . . [skips]. . . we would end up with about 2 1/2 billion dollars, billion dollars. The British would end up who were only planning to buy between 7- . . . [skips]. . . really won't, really won't end up with hardly any cost at all, because we find ourselves in for 2½ billion while they find themselves in for just a fraction. It's like somebody making a thousand, uh, you know, they just buy them at, uh, the marginal rate.

Eisenhower: I understand that.

JFK: Now on looking over your agreement here, looking over your agreement here, which . . . [skips]. . . "Skybolt in a desire to be of assistance in improving and extending the effective life, extending the effective life of the B bomber . . . [skips]. . . only to United States . . . [skips]. . . Skybolt missiles, Skybolt missiles minus warheads to the U.K. on a reimbursable, to the U.K. on a reimbursable basis in 1965 or thereafter. Since Skybolt is still in the early stages of development, this offer is necessarily dependent on the successful and timely completion of its development program. Sales will be without any condition as to use other than the general understanding . . . [skips]. . . about Polaris," uh, "about the offer you are making about Polaris, making about Polaris, making about Polaris," uh, "if to, for European force and the Scottish ports." It says, "We welcome the assurance that in the same spirit of cooperation, the U.K. would be agreeable in principle to make the

necessary. . . ." Well, it says "in the same spirit of cooperation." So there's a, so there's a slight connection.

Eisenhower: Yes. [Words missing]

JFK: But, of course, Tom Gates [Thomas S. Gates, Jr.] told me the other night that he had told Watkinson [Harold Arthur Watkinson] two and a half years ago this thing was in some trouble and, of course, we told 'em a year ago and they got the British out there. So they've known it's in trouble. But, of course, this places Prime Minister Macmillan in a difficult position because . . .

Eisenhower: Yes.

JFK: . . . this means that his . . .

Eisenhower: [I thought of that?]

[Conversation continues on tape 6C.]