

Jacqueline Kennedy Oral History Interview – JFK#5, 3/24/1964
Administrative Information

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Interviewer: Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.
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Biographical Note

Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy was the wife of President Kennedy; First Lady (1961-1963). In this interview Kennedy discusses Cuba and the rise of Fidel Castro, the Bay of Pigs, Latin America, foreign policy challenges, life in the White House, and impressions of foreign visitors, among other topics.

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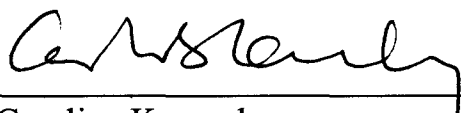
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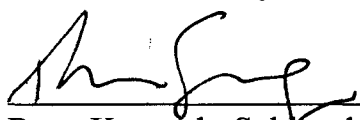
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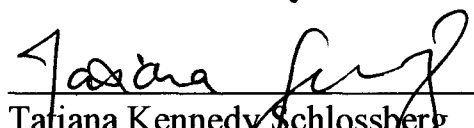
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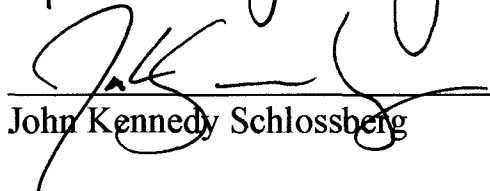
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Jacqueline B. Kennedy – JFK #5

Table of Contents

<u>Page</u>	<u>Topic</u>
1	Cuba and the rise of Fidel Castro
3	Bay of Pigs invasion
5	Post-invasion reflection and personnel
11	Latin America and the Alliance for Progress
13	Foreign policy challenges – Laos, Berlin and South Vietnam
14	White House life
15	State visit of Nkrumah of Ghana
16	State visit of President Sukarno of Indonesia
16	Visit of Alexei Adzhubei and the Khrushchev family
20	State visit and impressions of Harold Macmillan
23	JFK meeting Winston Churchill
24	JFK's impressions of Konrad Adenauer
24	JFK's state visit to Canada and impressions of John Diefenbaker
25	Impressions of Charles de Gaulle and Andre Malraux

Fifth Oral History Interview

with

JACQUELINE B. KENNEDY

March 24, 1964

By Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.

For the John F. Kennedy Library

SCHLESINGER: During the campaign, Cuba emerged as an issue. Had the President been much concerned about Castro? Do you remember in '59 when Castro first came in, what he felt?

KENNEDY: Well, I remember how awful he thought it was that he was let in. You know, we knew Earl Smith then who'd been Eisenhower's Ambassador at the time and so there was a lot of -- when we were in Florida -- so Earl could talk about it. Yeah, then Jack was so, really sort of sick that the Eisenhower Administration had let him come and then the *New York Times* -- what was his name, Herbert Matthews?

SCHLESINGER: That's right.

KENNEDY: I can remember a lot of talk about it and it wasn't -- didn't even Norman Mailer write something?

SCHLESINGER: Normal Mailer was very pro-Castro, yeah.

KENNEDY: Yeah. I remember Jack seeing --

SCHLESINGER: Did Earl Smith think it was -- talk about Communists -- Castro as a

Communist, or working with the Communists at that time? He has written a book, as you know --

KENNEDY: Yeah, *Fourth Floor*? Well, he was always saying his troubles with the State Department. I remember there was a man named Mr. Rubottom he kept talking about. And how hard it was -- he was -- you know, be warning against Castro and how just it was like, I don't know, dropping pennies down an endless well. He just never could get through to the State Department. So, I suppose he thought he was a Communist.

SCHLESINGER: And the President's view then was that, as you say, our policy was wrong in letting it happen but on the other hand, he wasn't -- had no sympathy with Battista.

KENNEDY: No. No, I can just remember the talk about it, you know. I'm not very good at --

SCHLESINGER: Then came the campaign. And then after the campaign -- remember when Allen Dulles came to --

KENNEDY: Oh, Allen Dulles came to Hyannis after, yeah. The first two people Jack thought he had to keep were J. Edgar Hoover and Allen Dulles and nice as Allen -- well, turned out to be not so --

SCHLESINGER: Nixon in his book wrote that the President had been told during the campaign about this, which is wrong since Dulles and the President both said he didn't know about it until November, about the fact that we'd been secretly training the Cuban --

KENNEDY: Well, he never said to me that he knew anything so, I believe that.

SCHLESINGER: When did you first become aware of all this brewing?

KENNEDY: Well, you always knew the Cuba problem but then, wasn't the week before it happened, every press conference or every week there was something about Cuba?

SCHLESINGER: The stories began to appear in March saying an invasion was likely, or something like that.

KENNEDY: And then all the time in his press conferences, Jack would keep having to say United States troops won't be committed, you know, sort of dodging everything that way. Then I knew about all those people being trained. I just remember, well it was like the second time when Keating was going on every

week about something that the missiles weren't out or there were more missiles there. I mean, it was just Cuba, Cuba all the time in one way or another.

SCHLESINGER: What did you -- do you remember what the President's feeling was about the invasion before? Did he -- for example, you mentioned the Fulbright meeting last time.

KENNEDY: Well, obviously, leading up to it he was always uneasy. But the time I really remember well was the weekend before which would be April 13 and 14? We were down in Glen Ora with Jean and Steve Smith and it was one afternoon -- you'll know if it was Saturday or Sunday -- about 5 o'clock in his bedroom he got a call and he -- I was in there and he was sitting on the edge of the bed, and he asked -- it was from Dean Rusk -- and went on and on and he looked so depressed when it was over. I said, what was it and everything. And I guess Dean Rusk must have told him -- been very much for it, or something -- or did Jack say, go ahead then? I guess that was a decisive phone call.

SCHLESINGER: I think this was the phone call about the air strike.

KENNEDY: Oh, that Dean Rusk wanted to take it away, I guess. That's right. So anyway -- and then Jack just sat there on his bed and then he shook his head and you know, just wandered around that room, really looking -- pain almost, and went downstairs and you just knew he knew what had happened was wrong. But I suppose he was in -- you know, it just was such an awful thing. He was just in -- well, anyway. Usually, as I said, he made his decisions easily and would think about them before or once he'd made them he was happy with them. And that's the one time I just saw him, you know, terribly, really low. So it was an awful weekend.

SCHLESINGER: You think his being low related to that particular decision to stopping -- cancel the air strike or to the general decision to have gone ahead with the invasion, or was that --

KENNEDY: I think it was probably a combination of all of them, don't you? I mean, the invasion in the beginning and then no air strike, or you know, everything -- half doing it and not doing it all the way, I don't know. Just some awful thing that had been landed in his lap there wasn't time to get out of. And then all the things that he told me about Cuba, I can't remember if he told me at the time or later, but you know, the meetings and how he'd say, oh, my God, the bunch of advisors that we inherited. And then later on when Taylor was made Chief of Staff he'd say, you know, at least I leave that to the next President -- or if Eisenhower had left me someone like that. Can you imagine leaving someone like Lyman Lemnitzer, you know, all those people in there. Just -- I mean, just a hopeless bunch of men. And I can remember one day -- would it after it failed, I guess, or before -- at the White House? And especially, I was on the lawn with the children and he especially came out with Dr. Cardona --

SCHLESINGER: Oh, yes. That was after.

KENNEDY: And, you know, well he thought he'd been wonderful afterward then. And he just --

SCHLESINGER: I think that was a Wednesday afternoon because I was sent down to Florida on Tuesday night and brought -- got up early -- and I brought Dr. Cardona back and took him in late Wednesday afternoon, and I think he brought him out and introduced him to you.

KENNEDY: And then he'd, you know, keep shaking his head, and said Cardona had been wonderful. But, if you want to go back over the chronology of Cuba, there was that awf -- that weekend. Then we went back to Washington Monday, then Tuesday we had the Congressional reception and Jack was called away in the middle of it and went over to his office and didn't come back until I was in bed. It was funny, because the next year of the Congressional reception he was called away for something else in a crisis. But last year -- it just seemed that those receptions were always nights something awful happened. So then -- you say Wednesday was the day everything happened. And I think it was Wednesday we had to have our pictures taken -- or maybe it was Thursday. Jack was restless as a cat -- it was Mark Shaw and he just came up and sat down for about ten minutes, this awf -- we didn't have any picture of the two of us together that you could mail out. Oh, it was an awful time, and you know, he really looked awful.

SCHLESINGER: It must have been unbearable to go to the Greek dinner in the midst of all this.

KENNEDY: Yeah, then we had to go to the Greek dinner that night. We'd had a lunch for them one of those days, either the day before or the day after. And, you know, they were so nice the Greeks. They were almost our first visitors. But I remember so well when they -- happened, whatever day it was, it was in the morning -- and he came back over to the White House to his bedroom and he started to cry, just with me. You know, just for one -- you know, just put his head in his hands and sort of wept. And I've only seen him cry about three times. About twice, the winter he was sick in the hospital, you know, just out of sheer discouragement, he wouldn't weep but some tears would fill his eyes and roll down his cheeks. And then that time, and then when Patrick, this summer, when he came back from Boston to me in the hospital. And he walked in the morning about 8:00, in my room, and just sobbed and put his arms around me. And it was so sad, 'cause all his first 100 days and all his dreams, and then this awful thing to happen. And he cared so much. He didn't care about his 100 days but all those poor men who you'd send off with all their hopes high and promises that we'd back them and there they were, shot down like dogs or going to die in jail. He cared so much about them. And then Bobby came to see me. You know, obviously there were meetings all the time -- probably that afternoon or something, you know -- and Bobby came over to see me and said, you know, please stay very

close to Jack, I mean, just be around all afternoon, if I was going to have to take the children out, you know, in other words, don't leave anywhere. Just to sort of comfort him, I mean, just because he was so sad.

SCHLESINGER: He said something to me that day or the next day about Bobby and wondering about making Bobby head of the CIA. Do you remember that?

KENNEDY: Oh, I remember him saying that a couple of times, if only he could have had Bobby as head of the CIA. Well, then I suppose he just thought politically that would be too --

SCHLESINGER: Too risky.

KENNEDY: Yeah. But you know, he so wished he could have Bobby there. Then I don't know when it was he got John McCone.

SCHLESINGER: It was about -- not for another six months, or so. He got him in the Fall. One of the great things, of course, was the fact that the President having really been led into this by very bad advice, nonetheless never blamed anyone publicly and had that wonderful Chinese -- proverbs, so called, do you remember? 'Victory has a hundred fathers --

KENNEDY: Fathers. Disaster is an orphan.'

SCHLESINGER: Is an orphan. Where did he get that? Did you ever know?

KENNEDY: I don't know. We could see if it's in Mao-Tse Tung 'cause I told you he had an awful lot of Chinese proverbs. But, he was always collecting things like that.

SCHLESINGER: How did he feel about -- it was Lemnitzer, I think, and the Joint Chiefs he held more responsible privately than anyone else, my impression.

KENNEDY: Yes, you know, he never really spoke unkindly about them but with sort of hopeless, wry laughter, he talked about Curtis LeMay. I remember the time of the second Cuba, he got a picture of all our airplanes in Florida, or all over the country just standing on the runways? And he called up LeMay, you know, there that man was shouting to go and bomb everything and have a little war and had left all our planes out. You know, LeMay was hard to work with. But, it was the whole thing -- the Joint Chiefs, and then I guess, poor Allan Dulles. And then again, there's Dean Rusk. I don't know if you should have -- it seems to me if you're going to do it you should have -- it seems to me if you're going to do it you should have had air cover. You know, Dean Rusk being timid, but all of that -- Jack coming in so late to something and

everybody -- I just wished if he had to do it, they'd let him alone. That was, you know, that was before the 100 days. I mean, it was silly. He never liked that 100 day business in the papers but it was obviously some little press thing -- Roosevelt. But you know, before they were even over, so you can see how early -- how it was in the White House.

SCHLESINGER: How did you feel about Dulles after this?

KENNEDY: Well, he always liked Alan Dulles and you know, he thought he was an honorable man and -- Allan Dulles always had liked Jack. And I think Allan Dulles sort of cracked up. Oh, 'cause a while later he went out of his way to have him to dinner -- or to make someone -- I know what it was. Was it Charlie Wrightsman? Yes, Charlie Wrightsman and Jane were in Washington and they were coming to the White House -- this was just a couple of weeks after Cuba, or a month -- and always Allan Dulles had been their little lion. They'd have him down and trot him out in Florida and everything. And Charlie Wrightsman was there and he said he wasn't going to see Allan Dulles. Usually when he was -- when in Washington, he did? Because of the way Allan had bungled the Bay of Pigs. Well, that just disgusted Jack so, he was so loyal always to people in, you know, trouble. And so he took me aside and said, have Dulles over here for tea or for a drink this afternoon. And he made the special effort to come back from his office and sit around with Jane and Charlie Wrightsman, you know, just to show Charlie what he thought of Allan Dulles. And, I mean, it made all the difference to Allan Dulles. I was with him about five minutes or ten before Jack got there. He just looked like, I don't know, Cardinal Mindszenty on trial, you know, just a shell of what he was. And Jack came and talked -- put his arm around him. What's that thing about Morgan, if you just walk with -- through the bank with your arm around me, you don't have to give me a loan, or anything? Well, wasn't that nice. It was just to show Charlie Wrightsman, but it shows something about Jack. But I mean, he knew he -- Dulles had obviously botched everything up. You know, he had a tenderness for the man. And then I guess right after that or Cuba, whenever, he got General Taylor?

SCHLESINGER: Yes. First he got General Taylor to head an investigation. Remember General Taylor and Bobby made a kind of inquiry into what happened. Then he brought General Taylor into the White House.

KENNEDY: That's right.

SCHLESINGER: As the President's military advisory.

KENNEDY: General Taylor always used to be in his grey suit then and sometimes Jack would say, when there'd be a meeting of the Joint Chiefs, you know, that you could just feel these waves going out from them wondering about what Taylor would be like and what a difficult situation it was for Taylor. And it was to his amazement it worked very well.

SCHLESINGER: Had he known General Taylor before this?

KENNEDY: I suppose he'd met him a couple of times because he was always talking about his book. And you know, then he'd say, imagine, can you imagine Eisenhower doing that, whatever all the things were that made General Taylor leave. General Taylor and General Gavin both wrote books, didn't they?

SCHLESINGER: Yes.

KENNEDY: But, and so he always thought so highly of him. He knew just where, you know, to turn the minute he needed his military advisory.

SCHLESINGER: We in the White House staff felt very badly, quite apart from the general horror of the thing, but we felt that we'd served the President badly, and some had thought -- some had been for the project and others had been against it. All of us felt that we hadn't done the job that the White House staff ought to be doing in the way -- that we had been too intimidated by all the great figures and hadn't subjected the project to the kind of critical examination it was our job to do. Did he ever comment on that?

KENNEDY: No, he never -- but, I mean, I don't think all of you should feel that way because look at what you did at the second Cuba. The thing was you were all cutting your teeth in there and nobody'd warned you about this thing. And you -- all these supposed experts when you come in fresh yourself, what can you do but sort of take their advice. That's why Lyndon Johnson's so lucky, at least he has a team of people who've been tried. And you hope to God if the country's been run these past eight years and there'd been crises that those men would know something what they were talking about. So he used to talk later, never about his staff, but, you know, about who he was left, who he inherited to turn to for advice. And that's what he was rather bitter about.

SCHLESINGER: And when the chips were really down, it was Bobby whom he turned to, wasn't it, more than anyone else to talk to and have counsel with?

KENNEDY: That's right. And then setting Bobby up with that committee and you know, I think that's where Bobby and General Taylor's friendship started because I would say after Jack, General Taylor was the man in Washington that Bobby is the closest to, I think -- I mean, besides his friends and people in the Justice Department. But you know, there's this really mutual respect they both have for each other. And it's very touching -- a very young man and a man who's at the end of his career.

SCHLESINGER: You said in an earlier tape that the times that you remembered the President being most depressed and under pressure were the state

committeemen fight in 1956 and the Cuban thing.

KENNEDY: Yes, well, not depressed at the state committeemen thing. That was more nervous, apprehensive, he couldn't stop talking about it. You know, then he had to do something to win. This one was sort of blundering along, he wasn't running his own show as he was doing in the Massachusetts fight. And then the awful depression when it ended and caring so about those people. And I think the compassion that shows, well, the way he used to talk to me about Cardona afterwards, and the way -- and he really felt obligated to get those prisoners out. That was -- was that the Christmas later or two Christmases later?

SCHLESINGER: Two Christmases later.

KENNEDY: But you know, when all this thing would go on -- first there were the tractors and Bobby felt so committed to do that. And just at that time there came an article about Bobby -- remember those other boring ones where they say he was ruthless and -- I just thought if they could have known the compassion of that boy. You know, you just couldn't let those people mold away in jail. Probably it would be better if you could have and people see that poor brigade staggering back and you know, remind you all over -- the country all over again of the big failure. But just this urgency to get them out. And then Jack would get so belted for the tractor thing. But he had to do whatever thing he could to get them back. Should I talk about that?

SCHLESINGER: Yes.

KENNEDY: I have another -- I just thought of something else about Bobby's compassion. It must have -- last winter -- you can find out when it was -- that best spy we had in Russia was caught. Was it Penowsky or Penovsky?

SCHLESINGER: Yes, Penkovsky.

KENNEDY: Well, Bobby was coming out of a meeting at the White House and he saw me in the garden and he came over and sat down on a bench just looking so sad. And he said he'd been out to see John McCone and he said, it's just awful, they don't have any heart at CIA, they just think everyone there is a number -- Spy X15 -- and then said that he'd said to them, you know, why this man was feeding you too many hot things he was just bound to get caught. And they'd keep asking him for more? Why didn't someone warn him? Why didn't someone tell him to get out? He has a family, a wife or children or something. Bobby was just so wounded by -- just treating that man like a cipher. He even -- because he even thought John McCone was rather --

SCHLESINGER: Well, people get into a kind of professional sense about all this and they no longer see people as human beings. And -- one of the most

outrageous things was the attack on the tractor deal. I mean, here if there was anything that was something this nation should have seen as its duty, it was to do everything possible to get those people out and the attack on it was always a very bad thing to me.

KENNEDY: I know.

SCHLESINGER: Remember, Mrs. Roosevelt and Walter Reuther and Milton Eisenhower formed a committee to do that.

KENNEDY: And then everybody blasted it. Oh, I know the heartlessness of them. Anyway --

SCHLESINGER: I think one reason the President felt so strongly about Miro Cardona and the members of that committee is that three or four of them had sons.

KENNEDY: That's right. I know Cardona had a son, didn't he? Then when the Cuban Brigade came in 1962, I guess it was -- Christmas -- too -- Well, first they all came up in the afternoon to the Paul house in Florida -- just the five of them or six. You know, Oliva and -- they all had these -- they all showed us pictures of what they looked like before -- they had in their wallets? They all had these wonderful, sort of El Greco faces, really thin. When they pulled pictures out of what they looked like before -- they really looked sort of like fat members of the Xavier Cugat band. I mean, they didn't have any pathos in their face. And how they were with -- you know, there they were sitting with Jack, nothing bitter, just looking on him as their hero. You know, they were nice men too. And they came -- since November -- they must have -- when I was in this house -- they came in February especially up to Jack's grave to lay a wreath, and Bobby brought them -- one of them around to see me and they all said that they were getting out of the Army or everything -- that now that Jack was dead they had no more hope for idealism or anything, they'd just all go out and try to get some jobs because it was he they were all looking to with hope. They are the men that had got them into it. It's rather touching.

SCHLESINGER: The President was deeply moved, wasn't he, at that Miami business?

KENNEDY: Oh, yes. That was one of the most moving things I've ever seen. All those people there, you know, crying and waving, and all the poor brigade sitting around with their bandages and everything.

SCHLESINGER: In fact, he was carried away and said some things that weren't in the text of his speech.

KENNEDY: I remember his speaking and then I had to speak in Spanish. You know a wonderful man that you should speak to sometime in Donald Barnes.

All the interpreters Jack ever had he was always the one with Spanish. He was so head and shoulders about any other. He made you have a good relationship with the person. That man was in so many -- I don't know, someone should interview him.

SCHLESINGER: Is he State Department?

KENNEDY: State Department interpreter. Some of them weren't very good. The one we had in Paris was just hopeless. Poor Sedgewick, trying to say his sort of flowery 18th Century French which no more sounded like a translation of Jack. Barnes was -- Jack said the two best interpreters he'd ever seen were Barnes and Adenauer's interpreter who we used in Germany instead of our own. He asked Adenauer if he could borrow his.

SCHLESINGER: Did he ever talk about the future of Castro and Cuba? Do you think that -- what did he think, do you think?

KENNEDY: Gosh, I don't know what he thought. I remember asking him this Fall -- oh, yes, that day that I told you about, it was one day in October, when he woke up from his nap and he looked very worried -- oh, I woke him up. I said something and he said, this has been one of the worst days of my life. Ten things have gone wrong and it's only 2:30. And he named some of them which I should have written down. Oh, anyway, one I can remember was the some little raid on Cuba had failed. And I sort of said, what is the point of all these little raids, you know. But he didn't -- I didn't like -- he sort of talked -- you know, he didn't really answer that question. He obviously didn't want to sit down with me and want to talk about Cuba because it was a worry to him. So I don't know what he had in his head or what his thoughts were.

SCHLESINGER: Jean -- did you see the interview that Jean Daniel --

KENNEDY: Yes.

SCHLESINGER: Did that sound -- what did you make of that?

KENNEDY: Well, I thought it no more sounded like Jack. And I can remember being in Mrs. Lincoln's office when Jean Daniel was brought in and being introduced to him? Then that came out after Jack was dead, didn't it?

SCHLESINGER: That's right.

KENNEDY: Well, it didn't sound like Jack. I forget it, but a lot of -- and then I even saw someone wrote it was over -- I can't remember what it said now but it didn't sound -- didn't ring true.

SCHLESINGER: The language didn't sound like him. Some of the things that were said did sound like him and some didn't.

KENNEDY: I don't even know if Danielle spoke English.

SCHLESINGER: Ben Bradlee brought him in, as I recall.

KENNEDY: When I saw him he was alone but maybe Ben sent him.

SCHLESINGER: Ben sent him, I guess. The -- you know, eventually Miro Cardona got mad at the United States Government and proceeded to blast, and so on.

KENNEDY: Yes, I can remember later on Cardona became rather a nuisance.

SCHLESINGER: I always felt the President understood -- had a certain sympathy with the frustrations.

KENNEDY: Yes, and you know, he never said anything awful about him. Just, you know, that was one more worry and thing in a day when there'd be a blast from Miro Cardona.

SCHLESINGER: The President had been interested in Latin America, particularly, because he became such a major interest in the Administration. But he had gone to Argentina, hadn't he in 1939 or something like that?

KENNEDY: Yes, he'd been there. I think he'd been to Brazil and a lot of places. Had he been? But he was really quite young then and I don't think, you know, I never remember him talking especially about Latin America before. It was really when he got into the White House -- well, we were there a very short time when he made his Alliance speech. So he obviously must have been thinking about it, during the campaign, in the interregnum, you know. And -- oh, did I tell you about him, the trip to Mexico? No, the trip to Venezuela? There was -- I went to an orphanage and there was a picture in the paper that evening. All the children were kissing me goodbye. And the headline was -- you know, it was very complimentary, it said, we love Mrs. Kennedy. Look, she permits herself to be kissed by Gringo children, by, you know, Indian children, whatever they were. And that just hurt Jack so for them and he said, you know, look at those people. You just don't know of the inferiority complex they have, that the United States has given them. Isn't it trag -- sad that they should be writing something like that? You could see on the visit to Mexico as it went along how Lopez Mateos really began to see that Jack believed all those things he was saying about our revolution was like yours. You know, at last they had someone they could trust who felt about them.

SCHLESINGER: That must have been an exciting visit -- the Mexican visit.

KENNEDY: That to me that was the most exciting of all.

SCHLESINGER: More than even Berlin?

KENNEDY: I didn't go to Berlin, you see, because I was having John -- Patrick. I guess Berlin to him was the most unbelievable. But -- so, what did I have? Paris and Vienna, and Colombia and Venezuela. Well, Vienna was incredible in that it was miles in from the airport and back and it was a dark, gray day. And just to see those crowds going on for 25 miles mostly weeping and waving handkerchiefs. That was one of the most impressive crowds I've seen. But, my gosh, the movie of Mexico, I saw it the other day.

SCHLESINGER: It was fantastic.

KENNEDY: You know, it looked like a pink snowstorm -- that paper coming down, and the cheers, and the 'vivas.' And they'd keep thinking of new things to yell 'vivas' about -- Viva Kennedy, Viva Los Kennedys Catholicos, Viva everything.

SCHLESINGER: He had an extraordinary sympathy for Latin America -- the problems of Latin America which they got and it --

KENNEDY: And he liked the Latins, too. And I remember I was so surprised because I thought, and I said this to him, and he agreed. Of all the great men that I met while we were in the White House or before -- you think, there's DeGaulle and Macmillan, Nehru, Khrushchev. The one that impressed me the most was Lleras Camargo of Colombia. You know, he wasn't at all -- and Betancourt enormously. But Lleras Camargo more. He was this thoughtfully, he almost seemed -- not German, but Nordic in his sadness. And just this dedication, that man getting thinner and thinner. When he came here to the hospital and I went to see him -- you know, nothing was ever in the papers about it. And he came in so thin to Jack's office. I guess he's really -- Jack said he's really -- I said, he looks so awful since we saw him in Colombia. And he said yes, he's done all that, you know, working for the Alliance, and he said he'd help again. But those two men -- and then I said to Jack, -- I'd always had this mania before about making my children learn French 'cause I saw how that other language absolutely doubled my life, and made you be able to meet all those people you -- but I said, you know, I'm going to make my children learn Spanish as their second language. You know, every -- we should just -- de Gaulle and everyone want to have their own little thing. But really, we should turn to this hemisphere. And I'm going to do that, anyway.

SCHLESINGER: I think one of the greatest things he did was to restore a sense of this being a common hemisphere which had gone out of the United States entirely since Roosevelt and the Good Neighbor policy.

KENNEDY: And it's so shocking, he noticed it in Mexico, and I noticed it again. I remembered it before. When you say Amer -- when we say America there, meaning our country. But America to them means both continents. They say North America and South America. You know, you have to bite your lip a couple of times when you're talking about America. And --

SCHLESINGER: The Kennedy name means more -- it's the best asset that we have in Latin America at the moment. You know, I wish the new Administration, for example, would ask Bobby to go down to Venezuela --

KENNEDY: They want -- they ask -- Venezuela asked especially for Bobby and Lyndon Johnson wouldn't send him.

SCHLESINGER: Did this just happen, or wait -- to go to -- for -- because you know, to mark Betancourt, the first president of Venezuela that served out his term. It would have been great.

KENNEDY: I suppose.

SCHLESINGER: I hope you'll go there sometime.

KENNEDY: I'll go but, that you know won't have anything to do with policy.

SCHLESINGER: No, but it will remind them what America -- North America is capable of, which would mean a lot. At the same time that all the Cuban things were going there was this problem of Laos. Do you remember anything about that? There was some talk of American intervention there which --

KENNEDY: Oh, yeah. Well, it just seemed always there was Laos, Cuba, South -- you know, I remember Laos so well -- and Berlin, but I can't remember which month was which. And didn't he go on television and speak about Laos?

SCHLESINGER: Yes, and that was the next year after the crisis was sort of simmering. No, no, you're right, it was that Spring.

KENNEDY: And then twice he went on about Berlin, didn't he?

SCHLESINGER: Yes, spoke about Berlin in June.

KENNEDY: I don't remember. You know, there was always -- there was always something like that about to blow up and always Jack living with that

and the pressure of being in the White House, and yet trying to live in an ordinary way and be what you should be for him when he came home. You know, hear what he had to say but not ask too many questions about something painful. I remember once this year about South Vietnam. Well, usually, I was so good about not asking questions, but then with all those flames and Diem and everything, the only time I really did I asked him something and it was at the end of the day. He said, oh, my God, kid -- which was -- it sounds funny but I got used to it -- it was a sort of term of endearment but I suppose his family used. He said, I've had that, you know, on me all day and I just -- see, he'd just been swimming at the pool and sort of change into his happy evening mood, and he said, don't remind me of that all over again, and I just felt so criminal. But he could make this conscious effort to turn from worry to relative insouciance.

SCHLESINGER: That was a great source of strength, I think, to be able to do that.

KENNEDY: So, I wasn't asking about -- and then, and then, he said to me either that time or another, don't ask me about those things. He said, you can ask Bundy to let you see all the cables. Or go ask Bundy." I said, I don't want to see all the cables. I used to get all India-Pakistan cables because I loved to read Ken Galbraith's cables. Then when Ken left I said, will you please -- and I used to get the weekly CIA, you know, summary. Finally, I just couldn't bear to read through those anymore. They put me in such a state of depression. There was never one good thing in them. Jack had to read those all the time. But he'd say, oh, go ask Bundy everything you want to know about that, he'll tell you. So I decided it was better to live -- you get enough by osmosis and reading the papers, and you know, not ask, and live in -- I always thought there was one thing merciful about the White House which made up for the goldfish bowl and Secret Service and all that. It was that it was kind of -- you were hermetically sealed or there was something protective against the outside world. You know, you didn't realize, you didn't hear mean things people were saying about you until a lot later. And you could sort of live in your strange little life in there. He couldn't but -- I mean, as far as your private life went. And I decided that was the best thing to do. Everyone should be trying to help Jack in whatever way they could and that was the way I could do it the best, you know, by being not a distraction -- that's not -- but by bringing him -- oh, by making it always a climate of affection and comfort and detente when he came home. And the people around that he -- I would try to have people who'd divert him. I don't mean -- there were always people from Washington or something, but you know, who wouldn't right on the subject that he'd thrashed about all day, and good food, the children in good moods, and if you ever knew of someone who was in town or could get someone interesting. You know, try to do that.

SCHLESINGER: Did you do all the inviting?

KENNEDY: Yes.

SCHLESINGER: He had absolute confidence.

KENNEDY: Yeah, and a lot of times if I couldn't think of someone, or something, I'd call up Mrs. Lincoln and say, if the President wants anyone, you know, tell him to ask whoever he wants for this evening. 'Cause some evenings I wouldn't want a sa -- a couple of times you'd arrange a little dinner of six people and it might be a night where he'd want to go to bed. So, I must say our last year was just one or two people all the time and then he'd decide with Mrs. Lincoln, or else -- you know, Walton, anyone.

SCHLESINGER: Do you remember when President Nkrumah came?

KENNEDY: Oh, yes! He was -- I think he was the very first visitor we had. He came up and sat with us in the West Hall, you know, in our private part -- private -- sitting --

SCHLESINGER: Apartment?

KENNEDY: Apartment, and Stash was there and Lee. And Stash had just told us before that Nkrumah had bought the biggest yacht in the Mediterranean that belonged to some shifty Greek friend of Stash's -- the Radiant. So Stash asked him about it, and I mean, and his eyes sort of rolled and he said, yes, it's being used to train the Ghanaian Navy, and Jack had a good laugh about that later with Stash. But he was very -- you know, he was nice, he was gay, he had this laugh. You didn't realize what a bandit he was going to turn out to be.

SCHLESINGER: Of course, he behaved in the most terrible way recently, but that was quite a -- agreeable visit, wasn't it?

KENNEDY: Terribly agreeable, and he was so -- you could see he was so delighted to be in the family apartment and I think he saw the children. He was so happy. And then I guess he'd given me some presents so I wrote him a thank you letter in my own handwriting and say, trying to be polite, because Jack made me feel how important it was that you make the Africans -- how awfully everybody had always treated the Africans -- how Eisenhower had kept Haile Selassie waiting something like 45 minutes, and, you know, and this chip on their shoulder they had anyway? So, I wrote him in my own hand and to be nice I said, would you send me a picture of yourself 'cause you were our first visitor -- foreign visitor. So about two weeks later, the Ghana Ambassador in all his robes came wading in and gave me the picture, but you know, in this kidding, I like Nkrumah. The only person I met who you knew was a bandit before he came and turned out to be all you expected was Sukarno.

SCHLESINGER: Sukarno was as bad as --

KENNEDY: Again, we had him -- those were sort of working visits whatever you call them -- but Jack brought him up to the West sitting room just

before lunch. I think he sort of had all these little worries of doing something a little bit extra for people. So, one thing was to come up and either have a drink before lunch or tea, whatever it was, with me, up there. He saw that coming up to the house would mean something to them? And so I'd gotten these State Department briefing papers on Sukarno and it said that Mao Tse-tung had published his art collection which meant an enormous amount to him, he was so flattered. So that morning I called State Department or someone and said, could I please get those volumes over, 'cause I thought it would impress Sukarno so if he saw them on our table. Well, they got there 20 minutes before he did and I hardly had time to flip through them. So I said, you know, Mr. -- whatever you call him, President or Prime Minister, I forget, but I knew -- we have your art collection here and we started to look at the volume together, it was enormous. Sukarno was in the middle, all three of us on the sofa, and Jack and I on each side. And we thrumbed through the pages and it was just a collection of like Varga girls.

SCHLESINGER: Oh, really?

KENNEDY: You know, every single -- Petty girls -- every single one was naked to the waist with a hibiscus in her hair. And I mean, you just couldn't believe it, and I caught Jack's eye and we were trying not to laugh at each other. I mean, you know, the kind -- it was so awful but Sukarno was terribly happy and he'd say, this is my second wife, and this was -- But he was sort of -- I don't know, he had sort of a lecherous look. And he was -- he left a bad taste in your mouth.

SCHLESINGER: Anyone else you didn't like among the --

KENNEDY: I didn't like Adzhubei and -- I didn't like him. He came up to the Cape. Oh, all right, it was very good what Jack did with him and Pierre arrange that and the interview and everything. But he came up there for that interview and he's a big, brash guy. Maybe he's very sensitive underneath but he came in the room and John came in the living room at the Cape -- he came running out of the dining room or something, having escaped from Miss Shaw as usual, and Adzhubei said, 'Ah, here's your son. In a few years he and my son will be shooting each other in war, or something.' Just --

SCHLESINGER: Very funny.

KENNEDY: You know, the most -- with a big laugh. I mean, he had that same heavy hand of humor Khrushchev but I thought much worse. Yet I liked enormously his wife. I didn't really like Madame Khrushchev too much and I hated the daughter that Khrushchev had in Vienna. She looked like some Wehrmacht blond who ran a concentration camp. But Adzhubei's wife was the only Russian woman -- see, Mrs. Khrushchev and Mrs. Dobrynin -- Dobrynin asked Jack especially if I'd have his wife to lunch alone, and I did -- but both of them have his really gamesmanship thing. If you'd smoke they'd say you shouldn't smoke so much. Russian women don't smoke

or do you go to engin -- did you go to engineering school -- you know, always trying to make themselves seem better. I suppose it was a chip on their shoulder. But, I'm trying to be polite and it didn't make it very comfortable. And Adzhubei's wife, Khrushchev's daughter, was the only one who was sort of funny who'd say, oh, don't you get tired of your children at the end of the day or, if only I could get a decent cook. You know, she'd make little jokes which -- she was very shy, but she seemed sensitive. And I always wondered how she ended up with such a brash man, but maybe he's nicer underneath. Because if you notice in Bill Walton's report that he wrote about Russia when he went there after Jack was dead, Adzhubei was really impressed that a doll Khrushchev had given Caroline was in her bedroom. It was one of the things he loved to take apart on a little table by her bed, also with the Virgin Mary and things? You know, so actually they're sensitive as they can be underneath.

SCHLESINGER: Madame Khrushchev --

KENNEDY: Well, de Gaulle said to me in Paris -- we were there before Vienna -- 'M'effiez vous, c'est elle la plus malin,' -- 'Watch out, it's she who is the craftiest of the two.' Of course, she has -- I loved her when she was in America with the Eisenhower visit. Then I just knew it through the newspapers. I thought she had such a nice face.

SCHLESINGER: She was like Bess Truman -- sort of a nice, comfortable --

KENNEDY: Yeah. She was a bit 'malin' I thought. You know, she really -- I mean -- I got sick of all that, those little digs all the time. Though she was very shy at the palace in Vienna where we had lunch. There was this protocol thing. For some reason, I outranked her 'cause Jack was President and Khrushchev was just chairman of the -- whatever it is -- so she wouldn't leave the room before I did. And I didn't like to go before an older woman and you know, she was just so hanging back, and nobody could seem to help so finally I said -- in desperation I took her by the hand and said, 'well, I'm very shy so you'll have to come with me.' And Tish and some interpreter told me that she darted over to a Russian in their party in the hall and said, 'did you hear what she said to me,' you know, she was sort of beaming. So obviously, they're all shy underneath, I mean, have their little chip. But Khrushchev with his heavy humor was -- I mean, he'd say nice -- he was --

SCHLESINGER: Does he have any charm, Khrushchev?

KENNEDY: Yeah, it's just one gag after another. It's like sitting next to Abbott and Costello, or something, to get through that dinner. But --

SCHLESINGER: Sort of a professional jolliness?

KENNEDY: Yes, but it's better than, I don't know, sitting next to Kekkonen of Finland and ask him how long he walks every morning before

breakfast. But then, you know, they had this ballet and I said -- all the -- all these swooping ballerinas in the -- in Schoenbrunn would come swooping towards Jack and Khrushchev and me and Madame Khrushchev, and I said, they're all dancing, they're all paying most attention to you, Mr. Chairman President, they're all throwing their flow -- and he said, no, no, it's your husband they are paying attention to. You must never let him go on a state visit alone, he is such a wonderful looking young man, or something, I mean, just something sort of nice every now and then. And then like a fool, I told Jack this later and he couldn't believe it. I was running out of things to talk to that man about. And all -- and Jack always said, you mustn't talk to these great men -- I mean, Mrs. Kennedy would read up about Russia or the wheat crop, or something, and that's the last thing they want to hear about. Talk to them about something different. Well, I'd just read *The Sabres of Paradise* by Leslie Blanch which is all about the Ukraine in the 19th century, and the wars and things, and the -- it sounded to me so rather romantic, the Ukraine, so I was telling him how I loved all that and the dance, the lezginka and the Kabarda stallion, and he said something about, oh, yes, the Ukraine has -- now we have more teachers there per something, or more wheat. And I said, oh, Mr. Chairman President, don't bore me with that, I think the romantic side is so much -- and he'd laugh. And then all I can remember -- you know, at last he could let down, too. So, God knows what we were probably talking about, the czar, I don't know. Oh, and then I knew that one of those dogs had puppies -- one of those space dogs, I knew all the names of those dogs -- Strelka and Belka and Laika -- so I said, I see where -- I see one of your space dogs has just had puppies, why don't you send me one? And he just sort of laughed, and by God, we were back in Washington about two months later, and two absolutely sweating, ashen-faced Russians came staggering into the Oval Room with the Ambassador carrying this poor terrified puppy -- he'd obviously never been out of a laboratory, with needles in every vein. And Jack said to me -- I had forgotten to tell him that -- he said, how did this dog get here? I said, well, I'm afraid I asked Khrushchev for it in Vienna, I was just running out of things to say. And he said, you played right into his hands reminding him of the space effort. But he laughed.

SCHLESINGER: How did he like Khrushchev?

KENNEDY: Oh, well, that time in Vienna there was no -- remember what he said at the end of that -- their conversation, he showed me all the transcript -- it's going to be a cold winter. And he said that in, you know, really scar -- then I think you'd seen just naked, brutal, ruthless power and -- you know, then Khrushchev thought that -- saw that perhaps he could -- thought he could do what he wanted with Jack. Khrushchev could be jolly but underneath there's a --

SCHLESINGER: He was very tough there. The President came back very concerned, I remember.

KENNEDY: Oh, he really was. I think he was quite de -- really depressed after that visit.

SCHLESINGER: Had he gone there with any particular expectations about Khrushchev or this is really sort of testing out, wasn't it?

KENNEDY: I don't think he'd gone there -- you know, I think he'd gone there expecting to be depressed, but I think it was so much worse than he thought. I mean, he hadn't gone there with any lovely illusions they could all work together. But then I used to tell him, for some strange reason I liked Gromyko's face. But this was before the second Cuba. One day, it was the funniest thing, I came out for a walk and there were he and Gromyko sitting in the Rose Garden. Before we'd done it over there was a tiny, little bench that -- you know, two lovers could barely squish on to. And he and Gromyko were sitting there on that little loveseat talking. And Jack told me later he wanted to get him out of the office and talk alone, and I walked by so Jack called me over. And I said to them, the two of you look so absurd just sitting in each other's laps like that. And then Gromyko smiled. People say he looked like Nixon but he had a nice smile when he smiled.

SCHLESINGER: Oh, really? He always looked awfully wooden to me.

KENNEDY: Well, if he did smile, or something, I don't know -- but then, you know, all the things he said to Jack before the second Cuba. That was really clever of Jack, the way he did that. And then the other time they met in the Oval Room and Jack said to him, you don't trade an apple for an orchard in this country. I can't remember what year, why they were seeing each other then, but I know -- I think Gromyko must have come three times.

SCHLESINGER: The third one was in '63.

KENNEDY: Maybe four.

SCHLESINGER: But the -- on the whole were state visits fun or were they a nuisance?

KENNEDY: Well, they were --

SCHLESINGER: Always vary, I suppose.

KENNEDY: They weren't a nuisance. I'd say they were really quite a strain. You know, the week that there was one, you'd really be tired. And you'd have to think -- and in the early days -- later on they got much better -- but in the early days you'd have to do so many things, I mean, just like you would for dinner in your house now if you didn't have any help. You'd have to see about the table and the flowers, I mean, sometimes Bunny Mellon and I would be there before -- just before it was time to get dressed for dinner, doing the flowers. You know, before you got in the people who could do them. And the food, and then we had to work out a way that it wouldn't come always cold from the kitchen. You know, there's no pantry in the White House, the kitchen is

below, and there used to be these endless waits. And then the entertainment you'd have to work on and get a stage built -- It was a lot of strain anticipating them and -- I'd say the only one that really was hard going was the Japanese -- Ikeda, who was, you know, a very nice man but neither he nor hardly anyone in his party spoke a word of English. So, that was a bit heavy going for lots of meetings. But I -- you know, I liked them -- I liked Abboud of the Sudan, I liked Karmanlis, Madame Karmanlis especially, so many. Each one was -- and what it meant to them. You know, that was what was so touching.

SCHLESINGER: Macmillan came in April, remember? You'd known him before, had you or the President had?

KENNEDY: The -- yes -- Jack had met him, what, right after in Key West and then in -- we met him in London after Vienna. It was just before Vienna that he came?

SCHLESINGER: He came in April, before Vienna.

KENNEDY: Well, I forget if that was the time.

SCHLESINGER: You must have known him before through the Devonshires.

KENNEDY: I don't know.

SCHLESINGER: Maybe not.

KENNEDY: But I know they corresponded ever since Jack was first in the White House. But, yes, then we had lunch, just Cissy and David, Macmillan, Jack and I, which was so nice, and they -- you know, they -- but it was such a happy atmosphere and they would stay in and talk. That was a very rare and touching relationship between those two men. They really loved each other. And, oh, if you could see their letters, and -- I'll show them to you some day 'cause they can't do them all on the tape. The one he wrote Jack by hand this summer after Patrick when he just was through the Profumo thing. And how Jack went out of his way to send him some telegram when he resigned and tell David that it could be in all the papers all that he'd done for the West. He loved Macmillan. You know, Macmillan had a way of looking like sort of a joke. Just his face had that sort of suppressed smirkness, funny clothes and things, but he was a --

SCHLESINGER: He was a sharp, old customer --

KENNEDY: Yeah.

SCHLESINGER: And I think -- I had the impression the President was completely impressed by his strong feeling about nuclear -- about getting the nuclear thing under control.

KENNEDY: Yeah, I know, I know.

SCHLESINGER: I know he used to write eloquent letters about the horror of nuclear war.

KENNEDY: Yes, and what did Jack say? That was one of the things he said -- what Macmillan had done for the -- Jack said, he really cared about the Western Alliance.

SCHLESINGER: What did -- did the President like Gaitskell?

KENNEDY: Yes, he did. Didn't he?

SCHLESINGER: Yes, he did. Do you remember his reaction to Harold Wilson?

KENNEDY: Oh, he couldn't stand him.

SCHLESINGER: There was a special relationship. Why -- the President and Macmillan, what would they talk about besides politics, because obviously they had a great fund of other things. Macmillan is a publisher and loves history.

KENNEDY: Well, they would be so irreverent and funny. Jack would tell me some of the things they said with the men at the dinner -- you know, after lunch, that I don't think I should say on a tape, even. What is it? One thing was, oh, people say that the younger generation have lost all hope living with this nuclear something. Look at them, they're perfectly fine, they're twisting and -- but, I don't know, just funny things. They'd amuse each other so. So then, we ma -- the one time I was ever together with them was that time at lunch at the White House. And when they came out somebody said something about Nehru, and I said how Nehru put his -- had given Lee a miniature of two Indians on a couch together and given me one of just a lady sniffing a rose and how he'd had his hand on Lee's thigh at the airport, or -- something rather irreverent. He just looked shocked -- but it was so funny. That isn't -- that doesn't describe what I mean. Jack had this high sense of mischief and so did Macmillan so I've never seen two people enjoy each other so. Obviously also, important things they were talking about alone but when it ended up with Cissy and David and us and him -- you know, or going down to Adele Astaire Douglas's who'd been married to a Cavendish, you know. Talk about a lot of family things I guess, but always this wonderful humor underneath it all.

SCHLESINGER: The President's year -- when he went to London in '38-'39 -- he wasn't there very much but it obviously struck a responsive cord, didn't it?

KENNEDY: I always thought -- it was really British history that he patterned himself on more than ours. I mean, that he read, that he was always -- I told you all the speeches -- Burke's 'To the Electors of Bristol' and Warren Hastings and you know, Charles James Fox. And then that showed him what to pick out -- he really gave himself a classical education through his own reading. I don't think you get that in this country anymore. Mostly through being sick and having read, but you know, the classics and then the English read -- and then that made him pick out what he thought was best in American thought and oratory. So he had such an admiration for all -- system and -- But when you look at it -- when we'd go -- the last time we were in London together, I guess was in '58, maybe? And had a dinner of all his old friends. Well, when you look at them all it was rather discouraging. David Gore was the only one who ever amounted to anything and he was -- and Jack always used to say he was one of the brightest men he'd ever met in his life -- he and Bundy, he used to say. But you know, the others were well, kind of defeatist or turned into nothing. You know, it wasn't -- he wasn't like Joe Alsop who dearly loves the lord and just gets so excited at the mention of anyone English. To seeing them now really depressed Jack of all those young men who'd been his friends in '38 and '39. Hugh Fraser, Tony Roslyn --

SCHLESINGER: Well, he was in government but it's a disappointed life.

KENNEDY: Yeah.

SCHLESINGER: Did he ever know Churchill?

KENNEDY: William Home, that was a great friend of his.

SCHLESINGER: Alec's brother.

KENNEDY: Yes. He'd liked Kick and he'd written -- you know, he'd gone to prison because he wouldn't fire on civilians in a town and that's where he wrote, *Now Barrabas* and then he wrote *The Chiltern Hundreds* about Kathleen. Kathleen -- she was the model for the American girl. She used to go see him in prison. And well, Williams was wicked and outrageous and fun. Jack always enjoyed him. But his plays got worse and worse and worse.

SCHLESINGER: You played the reluctant prime minister --

KENNEDY: Prime Minister. Oh, dear. Well, Poor William he has about four children to support and he has to write too quickly.

SCHLESINGER: Did he know Alec in that -- Home -- in that period?

KENNEDY: I don't think so.

SCHLESINGER: He's quite different from William.

KENNEDY: Yeah, well, William's sort of mad. He said -- Jack said something at the Black Watch, you know, this little speech before, about all of us have been drawn -- I suppose -- were drawn to lost causes and Scotland's history captured him at an early age -- it really was a long series of lost causes but it triumphed in some ways more than ever now. And as we were walking off the lawn up to the balcony where we'd watch the whole show, Jack said, I wonder if David Gore knew what I meant. Well, he meant that Alec Douglas-Home, a Scotsman was now Prime Minister.

SCHLESINGER: Did he like Alec Douglas-Home?

KENNEDY: Had he met him?

SCHLESINGER: Yes.

KENNEDY: Had Alec Home come over?

SCHLESINGER: Yes, he -- not as Prime Minister, but he'd been over as Foreign Secretary.

KENNEDY: I think he did like him -- I mean, I know he didn't dislike him. In fact, the first time I ever saw Alec Home was at Jack's funeral, and I liked him.

SCHLESINGER: He's a nice man. Had he ever known Churchill?

KENNEDY: The time we met Churchill was in Monte Carlo and some people -- oh, we -- we'd been asked -- we were staying -- we had a house in Cannes with William Douglas-Home and his wife and --

SCHLESINGER: This was when?

KENNEDY: It was either -- 1958 I guess. And the Agnellis had asked -- we were going over to have dinner with them and then they took us before dinner to Onassis' yacht to meet Churchill. But Jack had always wanted to meet Churchill. Well, the poor man was really quite ga-ga then and a lot -- about three -- you know, we all came on the boat together and he didn't quite know which one Jack was. He started to talk to one of the other men thinking he was Jack and saying, I knew your father so well, and this and that, and that was cleared up. Then Jack sat down with him and talked -- it was hard going. I don't think he'd met him before. But of course, you know, he read everything he --

SCHLESINGER: He really had read practically everything of Churchill's.

KENNEDY: I felt so sorry for Jack that evening because he was meeting his hero, only he met him, you know, too late. All -- think of all he could have -- well, he was so hungry to talk to Churchill at last and meet him and he just met Churchill and Churchill couldn't really say anything.

SCHLESINGER: Adenauer also came over that first Spring.

KENNEDY: Yes. Jack used to say, sort of what a bitter old man Adenauer was, or how he had to be prodded. He used to say, 89? Wouldn't you think he'd give up then but they had to haul him off screaming. You know, he got awfully fed up with Adenauer and all that Berlin. He'd take one private home because his mother's had an appendix or something and they'd start another weeping round. And he hated that Ambassador here. The only two Ambassadors he really disliked were that Grewe and the Pakistan Ambassador -- Ahmed, well, the new one's named Ahmed, so this was the Ahmed before this one.

SCHLESINGER: Well, the Germans wanted reassurance all the time and it got to be a pain in the neck.

KENNEDY: And you know, how much more can you do than reassure them. Well, he really did it, obviously, when he went to Berlin.

SCHLESINGER: Do you remember much about the trip to Canada?

KENNEDY: Oh, yes, that was our first --

SCHLESINGER: It was your first trip.

KENNEDY: I remember everything about it, you know, getting off -- And Vanier, the Governor General, is the most marvelous looking old man. And Madame -- you know, white mustache, sort of like C. Aubrey Smith. And Madame Vanier, very mother -- everyone curtsies to them. And I rode from the airport with her and that must be about 50 miles from the airport to Ottawa. And she would be telling me how to wave, always calling me 'dear,' she was very protective. I was still very tired then and so I had to leave the receiving line that night and half sort of wade through and Jack was so sweet, rather protective, getting me out of there. I remember -- I just had so little strength then. So before we went to Europe I took a whole week off in the country to get so that I'd sleep and build up my strength and so it was all right. But, everyone was saying that Ottawa was so cold and never gave receptions to -- nice ones to anyone, and I guess, especially to America, or something. And they really were -- well, they seemed like terribly enthusiastic crowds and everyone was flabbergasted. You know, you could tell they meant it. Here you even say to state visitors -- you're riding in from the airport -- Washington is blasé

and I've never seen them go so mad for any visitors as they do for you. Because they are hopeless here, they just stand -- But, he didn't like Diefenbaker.

SCHLESINGER: Well, Diefenbaker already was sort of erratic and crazy, was he?

KENNEDY: Oh, yes. And Mrs. Diefenbaker is such a nice woman. But -- oh, we had lunch at Diefenbaker's house and he insisted on telling all these Churchill stories in accent and calling him 'old Winston,' or 'the old boy,' or something. You know, it was just painful. He didn't like Diefenbaker. And then you know the story of that -- what, there was a paper that was left behind?

SCHLESINGER: The Rostow memorandum.

KENNEDY: Yeah, well Diefenbaker really tried to blackmail Jack with that. And whatever Jack said back to him was rather clever -- something -- how did you get this paper? You know, he never liked that man and he always liked Lester Pearson.

SCHLESINGER: You had met de Gaulle before -- when he came over here.

KENNEDY: I just met de Gaulle, Jack was campaigning in the Oregon -- out in Oregon and I just met him at the reception at the French Embassy and I guess I talked to him for about ten minutes.

SCHLESINGER: Was he easy to talk to?

KENNEDY: I suppose he wasn't -- I just -- I told him how much Jack admired him and made up something completely -- but I thought he was easy to talk to when we were in France.

SCHLESINGER: That was a nice visit, wasn't it?

KENNEDY: Yeah. 'Cause I'd ask him things of history -- all the things I wanted to know, like who did Louis XVI's daughter marry, the Duke of Angouleme, did she have any children, and this or that. Well, he was rather -- then he leaned across the table to Jack at lunch and said that Mrs. Kennedy -- in French -- Mrs. Kennedy knows more French history than most French women. So Jack said, my God, that would be like me sitting next to Madame de Gaulle and her asking me about Henry Clay. So, you know, he was very pleased. But then you could ask de Gaulle so many things, again, not talking about the obvious. de Gaulle has a very -- sort of courtly, rather nice way with women. I mean, I know he was interested in me and everything and impressed by Jack. And it was -- Also, Bundy was sitting right across from us at this first luncheon. You know, Bundy really looks very young, and de Gaulle said to me rather imperiously, 'Et qui est ce jeune homme?' 'cause he was also staring at Kenny O'Donnell, I don't know if Dave

Powers was at the lunch too. And I said, head of the National Security Council -- I don't know if he knew what that meant -- and I said, he was the most brilliant young head of Harvard so he leaned across and said something about Harvard in very halting -- you know, slow French, that you would say to someone who might not speak it. And Bundy answered in this brilliant French. I was just so proud. You know, it was strike one for our side or -- yeah -- or first run for our side.

SCHLESINGER: What was Madame de Gaulle like?

KENNEDY: Well, she just looked so long suffering, poor woman, so tired. You know they have more state visits than anyone. So sweetly going through -- very nice, but just limping through it all. At Versailles, well, the table was fantastic. You know, all the -- he had all the gold, there was Napoleon's ink well or something was in front of us and the tablecloth was -- had a lot of gold embroidery on it. So Jack turned to Madame de Gaulle and said -- his one attempt of talking to her 'cause she just sits there staring ahead, she's so tired, and said, 'this is the most beautiful tablecloth.' And her answer was, the one at lunch was better. And he said, 'oh,' and they fell into silence again. You know, in all the foreign state visits, it's different from here. The two men sit next to each other. So I always asked Jack if he'd like to do that at the White House.

SCHLESINGER: Oh, really? In other words the head of state sits next to the other head of state.

KENNEDY: Yeah, so it would go, from right to left, Madame de Gaulle, Jack, de Gaulle and me. And whenever you'd go to their dinners here it was done that way most of the time. Jack said, no he didn't want to do it that way. He said he saw enough of them all day in his conferences.

SCHLESINGER: He and de Gaulle got along well, then, didn't they? I mean it was --

KENNEDY: Oh, I think de Gaulle was very impressed by Jack.

SCHLESINGER: There weren't any premonitions then of the mischief that de Gaulle was to make later.

KENNEDY: Well, I think you -- you know, I know Jack always knew that 'cause he said it -- I know he said it before the trip or -- and he'd read everything that Roosevelt said. You know, he knew de Gaulle had this thing about the West, so I guess there wasn't anything then -- problem, but I think Jack knew it would come. Oh, he asked de Gaulle about his relations with Churchill and Roosevelt. And de Gaulle said -- oh, gosh, wait, I'll get it -- with Churchill we were -- I was always in disagreement but we always reached an accord. With Roosevelt I was never in disagreement and we never reached an accord. That's the gist of it -- he said it so much better -- and again, I didn't write that one down.

SCHLESINGER: Had you known Malraux before the trip?

KENNEDY: No, I -- Nicole Alphant asked me what would I like to do in the French visit and you could see that anything you said they'd turn the place upside down. So I said, please, Nicole, I don't want anything. Whatever you plan is wonderful. The only thing I'd like to do, somehow could I meet Andre Malraux. Do you think I could even sit next to him at some thing. And you see how really protocol and ruthless the French are because of course, about four days before we got there both his sons were killed in an automobile crash. And the first reception that first night, the Elysees suddenly the doors open and these two black crows come in, their faces all white and puffy and crying through the -- and all Malraux' ties going at once. And the whole place just fell into a hush. But obviously, it was the one thing I'd asked and so it was -- Well, in a way -- so the next day Malraux took me to the Jeu de Comme and then after, Malmaison, and then he was fine. And I think it gave him in a way -- it made him -- I don't know, I suppose it's good to have something to do after something like that happens. But that's when our friendship started and just listening to him.

SCHLESINGER: Did he and the President connect?

KENNEDY: Well, not so much then. They shouldn't have that much time to see each other but when Malraux came over here they really did, and then they came out to the country, you know, for lunch. And then Malraux came back for the Mona Lisa and again we had another evening of just us and then the Alphands. But you know, it's funny, walking down -- I guess, as we were walking from the dinner at Versailles to the theatre I was first with de Gaulle, Jack was behind with Madame de Gaulle and Malraux. And there are all these statues down the long hall and Jack said to Malraux, who's that? And Malraux said to the interpreter, 'tell the President he picked the only one that isn't a fake.' Which was true. And I said again -- that's what I said about Jack's eye. You know, that really impressed Malraux.

SCHLESINGER: Had the President ever read Malraux? Any of the novels or --

KENNEDY: I think he'd read *Man's Hope*, but you know, he --

SCHLESINGER: Could you -- he's an attractive guy, but can you understand his French easily?

KENNEDY: Well, he talks so fast, but I can. Or else he re -- no, but you just -- it's like being taken over this incredible obstacle course at 90 miles an hour. You know, what he makes your mind jump to, back, forth. He is the most fascinating man I ever talked to. Again, he's rather disillusioning because he sort of admires the simplest things. I mean, that dinner at the White House, he -- his most impressive moment was when they took the color -- you know the color flags -- the Honor Guard --

downstairs. And then, who was it? Oh, Irwin Shaw told me his greatest moment in life was when he was head of a brigade or something, in the Maquis. And he worships de Gaulle like, I don't know, some cocker spaniel adores its master. I mean, he seemed to have this incredible intellect and then certain sort of blind spots. And very old fashioned France and *la gloire* and flags, and but anyway --

SCHLESINGER: How were he and de Gaulle together? Did you see them --

KENNEDY: No, I didn't see them together very much, but you know, he was de Gaulle's lieutenant all through those years. Oh, de Gaulle -- well, de Gaulle was rather grand with him, especially as I wanted to talk to him -- he was always sort of leading you away. You know, in public he's very -- he treats him like some servant like Nehru treats the man who sleeps outside his door or something.

SCHLESINGER: Jim Gavin was our Ambassador.

KENNEDY: Yes.

SCHLESINGER: His was always a rather puzzling appointment. I know the President wanted to do something for Jim because he's certainly a fine man. Do you know why he was -- did he ever -- did the President ever say why?

KENNEDY: Why he was appointed? I think he asked him to do something else, didn't he? Which he wouldn't do -- I don't know why. Oh, he thought they'd like Gavin because of --

SCHLESINGER: Ah, yes. General.

KENNEDY: Yeah, he thought they'd like him because of the war but then I know he was rather disappointed when Gavin's cables would come back. Jack used to quote Winston Churchill -- never trust the man on the spot. And you know, that he'd gone so -- I remember Malraux saying about him, 'oh, yes, Gavin, il est Gaullist.' And you know something else nice that Jack did. This is the same sort of thing that he did about Allan Dulles and the Wrightsmans. When the Mona Lisa came over here Gavin was no longer Ambassador. He'd had to resign for money reasons. And we were -- the Alphands came to dinner one night, we were discussing who they would have at the French Embassy and the Mona Lisa dinner. And Jack said -- she was really -- she could only have a hundred and two and I think she was up to 99, or something -- Jack put Dick Goodwin on the list because he wanted to show how much he thought of him. But also he said, but you don't have the Gavin's here. Nicole said, 'no, no, why should we have the Gavins?' And Jack said, 'well, I think you'd better ask them.' And when they'd gone home Jack said, 'can you believe it?' He said, 'the French or power or what, there was Gavin who was the most pro-de Gaulle Ambassador they ever had. You know, probably one of our Ambassadors that they

liked the best. And then he's out there and they weren't even going to ask him to the dinner.' He was disgusted.

SCHLESINGER: As you say, ruthless.

KENNEDY: [Whisper] It's sort of running out.

SCHLESINGER: How did he like Herve?

KENNEDY:; Oh, old Herve? You know, he'd get amused by him sometimes. And then -- amused and sort of irritated the way Herve has that phobia about protocol. But then, he always said de Gaulle never spoke to Herve. You know, it was very hard for Herve. And every time we'd see David Gore or Caroline would go to play with Alice Ormsby-Gore, or something, you'd hear Herve moan all around Washington. But he enjoyed -- Herve could be funny sometimes.

SCHLESINGER: Very good mimic.

KENNEDY: Yeah, do you remember the toast he made at that party for Ken Galbraith about a Gemini? That he was a Gemini and Jack -- it was just after Jack's birthday -- and Jack was a Gemini, and he wished a toast that Gemini men were virile, brilliant, kind -- it was terribly funny -- and he wished to congratulate his government on having chosen him as a Gemini to be Ambassador to the Gemini President, and then he ended, 'Vive Lafayette!' He was just the whole party. I always used to tease him so about Lafayette. So he could -- he was all right.

SCHLESINGER: Well --

[END OF INTERVIEW]