

John T. McNaughton Oral History Interview – JFK#2, 11/21/1964
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Biographical Note

John T. McNaughton (1921-1967) was the Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Security Affairs from 1961 to 1962 and the General Council for the Department of Defense from 1962 to 1964. This interview focuses on the issue of weapons testing and the negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union over the Limited Test Ban Treaty, among other topics.

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This is an interview with John T. McNaughton recorded for the John F. Kennedy Memorial Library. The interviewer is George Bunn. The date is 21 November 1964. The place is the Pentagon.

Q. John, would you tell me your present job title and the title of each of your preceding jobs in the Government?

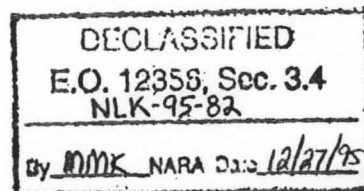
A. My present job title is Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs. I've held this position since March of this year, 1964. I came to Washington in 1961 as Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Security Affairs in charge of Arms Control matters. I served as a consultant the first few months and officially assumed the title in October of that year. I held that position until July 1962, at which time Secretary McNamara asked me to become General Counsel for the Department of Defense. I served there till March of 1964.

Q. Who brought you down here?

A. I came down to employ in an interesting way a year's sabbatical from Harvard Law School. Paul Nitze, then Assistant Secretary in my present position, wanted me to give that year as his Deputy for Arms Control, which pleased me. When I accepted the invitation to become General Counsel, I resigned the appointment at Harvard.

Q. I'd like to ask you some questions which will lead up to the Moscow negotiations in 1963 which produced the Limited Test Ban Treaty. You remember that the Soviets resumed testing in August of 1961. We resumed underground testing that fall, but we did not resume atmospheric testing till spring of 1962. You were at a meeting at the White House on February 26, 1962, which shortly preceded President Kennedy's speech March 2nd which announced the resumption of atmospheric testing. There was also a press conference at that time -- I think it was a day or two after the February 26 meeting -- at which he said any comprehensive test ban treaties that we might enter into in the future would have to have some provisions to guard against preparations for testing. Do you remember that controversy and anything about how the issue arose?

A. I remember several things in connection with this sequence of dates to which you referred. In the first place, there was the state of mind that we had prior to the August resumption of testing by the Soviets in 1961. The resumption of tests took us completely by surprise. There was a large school of thought in the US Government that the Soviets were testing clandestinely during that period. The argument in our Government was whether we should resume testing to protect ourselves against the progress that they were possibly making by clandestine testing under the moratorium. So it came as a great surprise to have them blast loose in August of 1961 with some open tests. I heard about it by a telephone call from my wife at home. It surprised me completely. The second point is that we were not ready to resume testing. We were not in a high state



of readiness to resume testing -- something which we now, in 1964, very carefully and expensively, by the way, maintain -- a readiness to test to protect ourselves against such an eventuality.

Q. Do you remember a May 23rd, 1961, Committee of Principals meeting back when McNamara was urging a resumption of nuclear testing?

A. I don't recall that meeting.

Q. But you remember that during that period there were people who were urging a resumption of testing because (a) we thought the Soviets might be cheating, and (b) people felt the need for the U.S. to test?

A. This is consistent with the Defense Department position. I was phasing into the Defense Department during this period. I remember one of my crucial encounters with my superiors about this time when the papers were coming under my jurisdiction in May. I recall revising a paper to send to McNamara analyzing the problem of Soviet cheating -- if it existed, how you protect yourself, what the risks are of various courses of action. I came down on the side that we did not need to resume testing, and I recall that this was not in accord with the position that the Defense Department had theretofore taken.

But the United States was not prepared to resume testing. We were able to carry off some less sophisticated and complicated underground tests fairly rapidly, which we did. We were not able to carry off atmospheric tests until six months later, in early 1962. Then there was the question of whether the surprise breach of the moratorium by the Soviets necessarily called for us to test in the atmosphere. As I say, we were testing underground, but it didn't follow necessarily that because they tested we had to test. There was a great political requirement to do this, but there might also have been a political requirement not to do it. I recall meeting with Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., who was doing some thinking in this regard for President Kennedy at that time. I met with him at the White House a time or two, and we discussed this. We ended up agreeing that, everything taken into account, resumption of atmospheric testing was probably the better course for us to follow.

Regarding your question having to do with the statement made by the President to the effect that we would have to find some way to inspect Soviet preparations to test -- that we had to have an agreement with them of some kind -- you state that the press conference was shortly before the speech of March 2nd?

Q. Yes.

A. I do recall that that statement came as a complete and distressing surprise to me because we had done a great deal of work to find ways to maintain readiness to test, having learned our lesson from the surprise of August 1961. In other words, we wanted to keep ourselves on a short fuse so that if they cheated at any given time we could protect ourselves with a minimum loss of time. I remember that Jerry Wiesner, working with people from the AEC, the Defense Department and elsewhere, had been given the job of working this out -- to find just how bad a shape we would be in in various areas such as weapons development tests, weapons effects tests, weapons proof tests and the like, if we had a standdown. Some of the problems are related to the fact that your scientists go to other jobs or you don't have your Naval Task Force ready to carry out the experiments. We'd done enough study of this matter to show that if you had a comprehensive test ban it would be quite difficult to maintain readiness. The next thing I heard was that the President had more or less concluded that therefore you can't protect yourself this way. The only way you can protect yourself is to keep an eye on the other fellow's preparations to test, which, if that had been studied, would have been even more difficult to do. The President never again uttered a sound about this position. He crawled off it as fast as he could after he'd made the statement, although there were a number of people that clasped the statement to their bosom hoping that this would be insisted upon.

Q. You remember later that year during April, May and June, there were meetings at the Arms Control Agency. These meetings produced two alternative test ban drafts, but we were probing to see if there were changes that might be made in the comprehensive draft that would make it better in our interest and perhaps more negotiable. And we were also trying to see how much we could prohibit without any on-site inspection in the Soviet Union or any observation post?

A. I recall the meetings. I don't recall the specific instances. Didn't we table a draft in April of 1962?

Q. No. There was a draft test ban in April of 1961. The test ban draft that was tabled in 1962 was tabled on August 27, 1962. There were two meetings before on July 27th and July 30th about two test ban drafts. You were present at both.

A. Yes. We tabled both forms, the comprehensive and the limited test ban treaty at that time. The only comment I have about this is that it was clear that the Defense Department, or, more accurately, the military aspects of the Defense Department, were not taking the atmospheric test ban itself very seriously. This was not the thing that concerned them. The greatest thing that concerned them was the comprehensive ban because they did not see how you could police the underground portion of it. Therefore, their main attention was paid to that problem and there was an implication throughout that the atmospheric ban would not be a problem.

Q. Now to get to the events of a year later, you remember that there was a series of discussions and a new test ban proposal prepared. You were then General Counsel but you were involved to some extent with a new test ban draft treaty which was prepared but never tabled and never made public. There was a Committee of Principals meeting, April 17, 1963, at which you were present and at which the new test ban treaty text was generally approved but was not okayed to table. Then there was a June 14, 1963, Principals meeting in which the new test ban treaty text had already been approved but there was a general discussion of tactics. You were not present, but Secretary McNamara asked the Committee not to give its final approval as he didn't think the draft ought to be tabled at that point, at a time that negotiations on the comprehensive test ban were at a complete standstill. The next date I want to ask you about is June 27, 1963, which was the Birch Grove meeting.

A. The Birch Grove meeting was part of a very busy schedule that President Kennedy had in Europe. I believe this was the time he went to Ireland, England and Berlin. I left to go to London on June 27, 1963. I arrived there on Friday, the 28th, specifically to be available to the President to assist him in connection with possible discussions with the British on the test ban. When I say test ban, I mean either comprehensive or atmospheric. It was not clear what we were going to go for or be able to do. As I remember, this followed the President's American University speech.

Q. That is correct. This was on June the 10th. There had also been a hint during June, based on a conversation by Prime Minister Wilson with Moscow, that the Russians might be interested in a limited test ban treaty.

A. I arrived in London as I said on Friday morning, the 28th. On Saturday I met with McGeorge Bundy in the Embassy in London. He told me that I should make myself available at Brighton. This is not far from Prime Minister Macmillan's home at Birch Grove. A crowd of people showed up in England for this purpose, some of whom were traveling with the President on the whole circuit, and others who just showed up for this purpose. I was put up at Brighton. I got a call later that day from Mac saying that Frank Long [Assistant Director, Bureau of Science and Technology, Arms Control and Disarmament Agency] and I should appear at Birch Grove the next morning. Sunday, the 30th of June, Frank Long and I had an early breakfast and took a helicopter from a bowling green at Brighton to Birch Grove. At 9 o'clock we reported to Mac, who had made an office out of the Prime Minister's study in his home. Also there at the time were Sir Solly Zuckerman with the British side, and [Archibald] Duncan Wilson [Assistant Under Secretary of State, British Foreign Office]. Solly Zuckerman, Frank Long, Duncan Wilson and I then went to Maurice Macmillan's house, which was a small house near the large one. We laid out the presentation that we wanted to make to the President and

the Prime Minister. From eleven forty-five till about one-fifteen that day, we four met with the President, the Prime Minister, Secretary Rusk, Lord Home, Peter Thorneycroft, David Bruce, David Ormsby-Gore (now Lord Harlech), Lord Hailsham (now Quintin Hogg, after he gave up his title), Bill Tyler [Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs], and [Sir Harold] Caccia [British Permanent Under Secretary of State]. We were sitting in a circle near the fireplace, and we discussed the issues we saw in the comprehensive test ban and in the atmospheric test ban, and what the prospects were that the Soviets might be interested in and what procedures we might use. I recall one interesting aspect here. When Mrs. Macmillan stuck her head in the doorway and indicated that lunch was ready, the meeting started to break up, but the President pulled me and Frank off in a corner to talk a little about the test ban problems. I noticed that the Prime Minister stood at the door getting a little anxious. Now, whether the soup was getting cold or the cook was preparing to quit, I don't know, but this went on for ten minutes or so. The President, who saw the fidgeting Prime Minister at the door, ignored him completely and finished his conversation. Then we proceeded to go to lunch.

Q. What was the President's state of mind then?

A. He was totally at ease and enjoying the meetings fully. It was a crisis for the Prime Minister, because the Profumo scandal had broken very shortly before. The newspapers were completely full of it. Some newspapers were selling at a premium price of ten to one over normal in order to get all the gory details. There were meetings of the Conservative Party going on to pass on what to do about this. But the Prime Minister seemed at ease, as did the President, and he seemed to be just exploring and discussing. He was completely relaxed.

Q. How did you happen to get so much into this series of events?

A. At this time I was General Counsel. Then too, I had been Deputy Assistant for Arms Control, so I had been in on most of this. Also -- partly because I had come from Cambridge, Massachusetts -- I knew many of the people in the White House. I knew Mac Bundy, who was my next-door neighbor and tennis doubles partner, and I knew Carl Kaysen, who had taught from time to time on a loan basis at the Harvard Law School. I knew Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., who worked on this to some extent. I had come to know Butch [Adrian] Fisher well from prior exposure to him, and I had worked with you [George Bunn, Arms Control and Disarmament Agency] a good deal. Then there was the fact that I was at the level of an Assistant Secretary, so I was the Defense Department civilian who would naturally be called on, and I had frequent access to Mr. McNamara and understood his problems and attitudes.

Q. Let me ask you right here, did you observe the President's use of this group of people to get decisions that he perhaps wanted to get, that he was looking for, that he was reaching for, in the nuclear testing area, the test ban in particular, but other things too? Did you see him trying to lead the way using this group? What tactics did he use to overcome what opposition he might have sensed would occur in places of the Government particularly?

A. Let me mention first that I left out a key person -- the key person -- who is also of Cambridge origin. That was Jerry Wiesner. In answer to your question, I was never in the private conversations that the President had with Mac Bundy or with Jerry. But I sensed something at meetings we had with the Principals on these matters. I'll take one example which we may get to later in connection with disarmament. I had to state the Defense Department's position, which was opposed to the Arms Control Agency's position. The President heard both sides out and made his decision very rapidly. It was clear to me that he had heard the argument before. He'd been fully briefed on what the argument was and I'm confident that he'd discussed it with Mac and perhaps with Jerry and they'd weighed the pros and cons and had, in effect, decided the issue. I think the President, in a general way, was anxious to make progress in the arms control area in two senses. One was in our own unilateral behavior -- that we behave in a restrained, sensible way; the other was in the area of making agreements with other countries, particularly with the Soviet Union. But I think Carl Kaysen, working as Mac's deputy, and Jerry Wiesner were the two in the White House who were the driving forces in getting things done. As we lead up to the test ban agreement, I think you'll find that Carl Kaysen played a very important role in getting the decision to make an overture, to send someone to Moscow, and in picking the man to do it. It turned out to be Averell Harriman. I think he also had something to do with the American University speech.

Q. Was there concern at that time about what the attitude of the Joint Chiefs of Staff might be? Did they play a role?

A. Certainly. The Chiefs' views were obtained throughout this whole discussion.

Q. Do you think the President really sensed this problem? Did he expect you to help handle it?

A. The President didn't look to me. He looked to the Secretary of Defense in this connection. When I was representing the Defense Department overseas I was looked to as a member of the team for this purpose. But I think we want to be clear about the extent to which the Chiefs were consulted. The President obviously was concerned about their views on this, not only because of the substance of their views, but because

of the political impact of having a differing view. There was a bit of a dispute after the test ban was signed as to the extent to which they'd been consulted. This was a semantic debate, in my view, because the Chiefs, as a corporate body, are not consulted until they have been given a formal question which they then process formally and give a formal answer. If you haven't gone through that process, it is honest to say the Joint Chiefs of Staff have not been consulted. On the other hand, every piece of paper we got, we immediately fired down to their staff. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs was apprised of the developing thinking at all points. Whenever a Principals meeting was held, the Chairman was there; in the early days he was present with the Secretary of Defense, and later on as an actual full-fledged member of the Committee. So the consultation in a layman's sense was there throughout and the President was sensitive to this. He understood he had opposition there, but it didn't turn out to be strong, as it developed.

Q. But I've interrupted your Birch Grove discussion?

A. I think that's the end of the Birch Grove discussion. It was clear that the British at this meeting were not as sensitive as we were to the possibilities of Soviet cheating, for example. I now recall that, as the Birch Grove meeting was approaching, there was a feeling beginning to arise in the Defense Department that maybe we'd end up with an atmospheric test ban. As I indicated earlier, not much attention had been paid to the horrors of an atmospheric test ban. It had been paid primarily to the possibility of a comprehensive test ban.

Q. Is it fair to say that you and the others participated actively in the development of that August 27th limited atmospheric test ban?

A. Yes, we all participated in it but it was not the focus of attention. By the time of the Birch Grove meeting, I had already spent some time trying to find out what the dangers of an atmospheric ban would be. Is it possible for the Soviets to cheat over the South Pacific at certain altitudes without your being able to catch it? Could they have underwater tests without our being able to catch it? And so forth.

Q. Was that the subject of the President's discussion with you at the Birch Grove meeting?

A. This is one item that came up. I'd borrowed a typewriter and I'd typed up an outline of what our presentation would be, and I do recall this being one of the points we made. The British sort of pooh-poohed it. Sir Solly, for example, would not subscribe to any part of this. He felt that it was a lot of nonsense that the Soviets might try to cheat on an atmospheric test ban. He said, "I suppose they could go out behind the sun and blow up something if they wanted to spend all their natural resources to do it." He jokingly dismissed our concerns.

Q. There was a meeting at the White House with President Kennedy shortly after that, on July 3rd, 1963, which is in Mrs. Lincoln's appointment book but not in our files, about the test ban. Do you recall that?

A. I don't recall that meeting, but I have the record of it here. Ten o'clock in the morning on July 3, with the President in the Cabinet Room. I suspect that this was part of the construction job that was going on.

Q. Does it refresh your recollection to know that the day before the meeting Khrushchev had made his speech in East Berlin saying the Soviets were ready to join in this limited test ban?

A. It does not. It merely fits the pattern because I note I had a meeting with Carl Kaysen on the first of July at four o'clock in the afternoon. All of my general notes here relate to studies of cheating and thresholds of atmospheric test ban technical situations and potentials, and the military implications of technical developments. This meeting with the President on the 3rd makes sense because then on the 9th I had a six o'clock meeting with the President in the Cabinet Room at which Governor Harriman got his instructions.

Q. That's right.

A. This whole thing was given birth in that week. I was kept in the dark about my going.

Q. Did you think Kaysen had decided that it'd be a good idea if you went?

A. I recall leaving a meeting somewhere and giving Abe Chayes, then Legal Adviser to the State Department, a ride in my car. I mentioned to him that I thought it would be quite useful if he ended up on this team that went to Moscow if Harriman went. And he smilingly said that he didn't think he'd be going because they already had a lawyer in mind. It turned out to be me.

Q. Do you have more on this period?

A. After the meeting with the President on the 9th, at which he got his instructions, Governor Harriman the next day called the whole team to his office for their security briefing. They cautioned you not to go out with any strange women and to be sure that you don't leave any papers lying around, and don't talk too much in the Embassy, and so forth. The Harriman team left here to go to London on the 11th. Friday, the 12th, we had a series of meetings in London which I think I can say were quite illuminating for two reasons. One, the less interesting of the two, was the getting together on what our position would be. It was fairly clear

that Averell had in mind that we'd go in for a comprehensive ban, but that there wasn't a chance of getting it. We had Frank Press [Consultant, Arms Control and Disarmament Agency] with us, by the way, the expert on underground detection.

Q. Did you have Frank Long, too?

A. Yes. The team that went were in addition to the Governor, not in order of rank, Alex Akalovsky [Bureau of International Relations, Arms Control and Disarmament Agency], who not only is an expert but was the Russian interpreter; Butch [Adrian] Fisher [Deputy Director, ACDA]; Carl Kaysen; Frank Long; Ned [Nedville] Nordness [Public Affairs Adviser, ACDA]; Frank Press; Bill Tyler; Frank Cash [Bureau of European Affairs, State Department]; and then we had three secretaries with us. The meetings that I was referring to in London on Friday were interesting. From the first, as our position took shape, you could see that the British were going to have a test ban. This is related to some extent to a political requirement they felt they had. I don't know whether this was tied to the Profumo scandals or what, but they were going to have a test ban. The second thing was that Hailsham had been picked as their man and quite frankly he didn't know a thing about the subject. He did care very much; he was going to deliver a test ban. We had a meeting Friday morning in which he proposed that we rewrite our draft. Then we had another meeting that afternoon in which we discussed the draft, the tactics, and so forth, and it was decided that Harriman was going to be the ball carrier. One of the tense moments came when Hailsham said that certain paragraphs of our draft were unacceptable. At this point, Harriman made the remark that he was not prepared to change one word of this piece of paper and that if the proposal was to call off the meetings in Moscow, he was willing to consult his Government about this.

The whole tone of the meeting from there on changed and the thing was put in perspective. There was one point I recall when Hailsham started raising questions which showed that he didn't distinguish the two problems of identification of an underground test, or event, as contrasted with the detection that some event had taken place. You worked on this and know the important difference between these two, but he kept confusing the two in the conversation, which led to the amusement and dismay of almost everyone at these meetings. This was on the 12th. On the 13th, Saturday, Butch and I worked with Duncan Wilson and some other Britishers on certain detailed problems, while Governor Harriman met with [Thomas] Finletter [U.S. Ambassador to NATO], who'd come from Paris, and George McGhee [U.S. Ambassador to Federal Republic of Germany], who'd come from Bonn, to talk about certain problems. But we were working within our own team primarily on Saturday, and then Sunday we left for Moscow.

Q. May I ask you if you had any overall sense of the President's attitude, based on the meeting of July 9th or on the instructions issued or from telephone calls made during this period?

A. My general feeling was that the President wanted a test ban. If I had to guess, I think he considered most of the debate about inspections as a bit of nonsense. I think he felt that the kind of test that was small enough to be under the threshold where you could fairly obviously suspect it of being a test in violation, taking into account all forms of intelligence that you've got -- that this was just not as important as the test ban. But he was more or less bound by the facts of political life not to accept a test ban unless it had at least a tolerable number of on-site inspections allowed. And, as you recall, at this time Khrushchev had said he'd give us three on-site inspections. It's interesting to note that it's just 36 hours ahead of where I'd gotten on the chronology, when Khrushchev flat-out withdrew that offer.

But the President's view was to get something. This was one reason he picked Harriman. Harriman said, "We'll go over, we'll spend a week or ten days, and we will either get fish or cut bait." Harriman talks turkey; he understands the Russians. He dealt with them for years and he knew that if he was going to get something, he'd get it. If they're willing to come along, they'll come along; and if they're not, they're not, and he would come home. But he intended, if at all possible, to end up with a test ban.

We arrived there on Sunday. We met with the British that night at 8:30 in their secure room. Ambassador [Sir Humphrey] Trevelyan was there, Lord Hailsham, and Duncan from their side and a person named Press, I think it was Robert Press, who was a specialist on their side. Also there was Sir Solly Zuckerman, and Penney, who was another one of their experts. On our side was Governor Harriman, Foy Kohler (our Ambassador), Bill Tyler, Butch Fisher, Carl Kaysen and myself.

I have notes of all these meetings throughout the negotiations. I think I should have them photostated and attached to the tape.

The first meetings with the Russians took place on Monday. This was the time when Governor Harriman with Foy Kohler, accompanied by an interpreter, Butch Fisher and Carl Kaysen, joined with Hailsham, Ambassador Trevelyan, Sir Solly and Duncan Wilson to meet with Khrushchev. I was not present at these first meetings with Khrushchev. It was at this time that Khrushchev, after some discussion, withdrew the three on-site inspections. Khrushchev handed Harriman a single sheet which was the test ban that they wanted. I have a copy of it in my notes. It had some preamble about "whereas this is a good idea -- we'll swear off testing in the atmosphere, outer space and underwater." It was almost that simple. Then it had a second paragraph that said, "When the United States, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and France sign the treaty, it becomes effective." It was a single sheet of paper.

Meanwhile, Governor Harriman handed him the paper that we'd carefully negotiated for years on the comprehensive test ban. He also handed him the atmospheric test ban draft. This led to some conversation about the inclusion of France as a required signatory. This permitted Harriman to ask him about China. And according to Harriman's report to us that evening, Khrushchev said, "They're going to have them anyway but they won't have any military capability for several years and in any event it's not going to amount to anything. It'll be like the French capability. Forget it." And the implication was that you could forget the British, too.

Q. But at least that gave you an indication that he wasn't really set on having France as a part of it?

A. That's right. France dropped out almost immediately as a necessary signatory. Then we launched into these meetings which usually took place at 3:00 in the afternoon at what they called the Spiridonvka House, which is a grand place not far from the center of Moscow that had been put up before the Revolution. All of us sat around a large table, with Governor Harriman doing all the talking, except once in a while he'd call on Butch to make a remark. Butch Fisher was named the head of our drafting crew, which was called "the young men" as contrasted to what was called "the old men." The British were represented by Henry Darwin.

Q. The grandson of Charles.

A. Yes. We met in the mornings -- with "Scratchy" Tsorapkin heading the Russian drafting crew -- to effectuate the decisions reached, raising issues for the plenary session in the afternoon.

Q. Perhaps there were some sidelights about the meetings that were interesting?

A. I'll just mention a couple of the issues here. First, there was the Non-Aggression Pact. Khrushchev had made a speech in July of that year in which he made the remark that he was interested in a test ban, but he used some language which was ambiguous to us as to whether this was linked to a requirement for a Non-Aggression Pact. If I may speculate, I think that Bill Tyler went along to assist Harriman because of this possible linkage. Bill was the Assistant Secretary for European Affairs at the State Department and knew as much or more about this than anybody. Foy Kohler had held that same position in the State Department and knew very much about it. The Non-Aggression Pact was raised the first day by Khrushchev, according to Harriman, as being something he wanted. Harriman's position was flat out. We were not negotiating a Non-Aggression Pact, period. Now, he didn't necessarily say it like that but it came out that way.

So we continued to ignore the Non-Aggression Pact and, when they raised the point, we would say that it is something that we have to talk about with our allies, and so forth. Each day as we would negotiate, with varying degrees of insistence, the Russians would bring it up. At the time for the communique at the end of the meeting, there would be an agreed statement that we'd discussed the possibilities of a test ban. We had a form sentence that went something like "and other related subjects" to include the Non-Aggression Pact. This did lead to one of the sidelights. At one point when we had proposed a communique and we read it off, Gromyko, in his heavy English, said "And other related subjects," even though the subject had not been mentioned at all that day. And toward the end of the meetings they did make a fairly solid pitch for a Non-Aggression Pact.

Q. According to the cables, Gromyko did more than Khrushchev. Khrushchev almost let it go in the very first meeting and Gromyko came back and grabbed it again and kept pushing it?

A. Yes. Now, Harriman, who has an amazing intuition and one that I greatly admire, considered: (a) the comprehensive test ban was out; (b) the Non-Aggression Pact was going to consume some time, but was out; (c) the greatest problem we were going to have with the Soviet Union dealt with the word, "Chinese." The Chinese were in Moscow at the same time we were. I'm not sure who was talking to them or when, but Gromyko was with us at the meetings in the afternoon. On the Non-Aggression Pact, when it came time for the final communiqués wrapping up all the meetings, there was a good deal of talk about how it should be handled. The final communique, as I recall, said the United States would consult with its allies about the possibility of the Non-Aggression Pact.

An interesting double twist on this was that the Russian language interpretation had a word which made it sound like the United States would consult with its allies about negotiating a Non-Aggression Pact. The English language said we would talk with our allies about "discussing" rather than "negotiating." The Russian word could be interpreted either way -- as "discussing" or "negotiating." The Russians noticed this word in the Russian text and suggested to Alex Akalorsky that it be changed. They suggested a word which meant only "discussing," in order to help us in the interpretation.

Q. They suggested a change in the Russian word?

A. Yes. An interesting further twist on this was that through translation into French and back out of French, which was done in Paris, the word "negotiate" got back in somehow, and subjected the Harriman mission to some criticism at the time.

Q. How did this go to Paris and come back again?

A. It didn't come back. It was just that when the communique was released, it was published ultimately in Paris. The French word, as translated into German, for example, led the Germans to think that we had agreed to something which we had not agreed to.

Regarding the on-site inspections and the comprehensive test ban, this was dropped within 24 hours after we got there, although we tried to make use of Frank Press and Frank Long, who were there, to meet with some of their scientists. Their scientists all had diplomatic illnesses and were unable to discuss, meet or do anything, so Frank Press went home and Frank Long debated whether to return to the States. But he understood, and he was very useful in all aspects of this problem and, as it turned out, he was a very good draftsman. So he stayed behind and joined in the debates and the exercise.

The next point is the peaceful uses problem, which has caused us the most trouble since, in two respects. One, we ended up eliminating the possibility of atmospheric peaceful uses. Secondly, in so doing we had to rewrite our text. Our text provided for peaceful uses, I think in Article 2. In eliminating this, we had to rewrite what was prohibited. So it ran something like this. Our original draft said that weapons tests are prohibited. Then Article 2 said peaceful uses tests are permitted under very stringent limitations.

Q. That's right.

A. Article 1 said nuclear weapons test explosions are prohibited. Article 2 said that peaceful uses tests, under certain stringent limitations which will be worked out, are permitted.

This got tied, in the negotiating sense, for no logical reason, into the withdrawal clause. Harriman was under instructions from the President that he could concede the peaceful uses tests underground. As I recall, he felt he had this authority. There was no question as to what his tactic was going to be on this. Butch and I were then given the job to work out with Tsarapkin language which expanded Article 1 not only to prevent weapons tests, but to prevent any other nuclear explosion. This was drafted by Butch and me, and it does prevent peaceful atmospheric tests, but it raised another question -- that, if you prevent any other nuclear explosion, have you sworn off the use of nuclear weapons during war? I have a copy of a cable here that I drafted at the time. It is dated the 18th of July, 1963, and I have written up in the corner: "I read this to Harriman and Hailsham at 4:15 p.m., July 18th. Harriman decided not to send this telegram, but rather simply to ask Washington for approval of the new Article 1 language." He said, "They're not stupid. They can read." My fear was that the communications with Washington were being so closely held, with the President and Mac Bundy and maybe five or six others, that this point might be missed.

Q. Not many more than that. [William C.] Foster saw the cables and I saw them through Foster. Abe Chayes was brought in a little later. We knew what the issue was, but didn't take it too seriously.

A. Let me give you a little background on this. On a decision by Carl Kaysen, as I recall, we were not even sending reporting cables the first couple of days.

Q. There were some that came back. I think it was a question of how long they would be?

A. Yes. We were giving very brief cables and sending the rest by airgram, and we got word very quickly that you wanted detailed reports of what was going on.

Q. It was the President. He wanted to know.

A. He wanted to know, and in detail. That was the first slap on the hand. The second one was this issue -- when I raised the question whether Article 1 could not be construed by a critic as preventing the use of nuclear weapons during war. I recall being upstairs in the Embassy when all of a sudden I was given a message that Harriman wanted to see me. I went down to where he and Hailsham were in the secure room. Hailsham was pounding on the table and saying, "I won't have it! I won't have it!" I said, "What's the matter?" Averell said, "John, I understand you don't like our Article 1." I said, "It's not that I don't like it; I just think that a critic could read this to mean that we're barring the use of nuclear weapons. This is in effect a swearing off the use of nuclear weapons in anger, by a literal reading." And Hailsham said, "I will not have this issue reopened." You see, we'd already drafted some language and presented the proposal to the Soviets.

Then I said that what we might do is send a telegram to Washington to read:

"McNaughton suggests that Secretary McNamara's attention be called to the language of revised Article 1. Read out of context and without regard to customary international law, the Article could be read literally as outlawing use of nuclear weapons in war. Also relevant in this connection are laboratory experiments, canal building, which now becomes very relevant, Project Orion (a method of propulsion by successive explosions), and non-weaponized devices. At one time there was a problem even with non-nuclear parts of nuclear weapons. Earlier U.S./U.K. language for Article 1 was aimed solely at nuclear weapons tests, and this was probably suitable so long as there existed an Article 2 covering peaceful uses. The theory was that the two articles were complementary and covered all peacetime cases. On dropping Article 2, peaceful uses, Article 1 is redrafted here to deal with 'nuclear-weapons-tests explosions and any other nuclear explosions' in the first paragraph, and with 'any nuclear explosion' in the second paragraph. Fisher and McNaughton

fail to find politically acceptable language short of that which would plug the peaceful uses loophole. From the legal point of view, (a) proscriptions in Article I must be read in context of a test ban treaty, and (b) it is accepted that treaty undertakings not clearly intended to govern conduct during war cease to exist in war. The revised language therefore does not, repeat not, have the effect of outlawing use of nuclear weapons during hostilities. The problem, if one arises, should be only with over-literal critics who may have to be faced, especially during the period between signature and ratification."

This is the cable I wanted to send out. But Harriman decided that they had their own lawyers in Washington and they could figure this out. He decided not to send it so it was not sent. That's one of the side-lights on peaceful uses which leads into the withdrawal clause problem.

On the withdrawal clause, the Russians took the position they didn't want a withdrawal clause on the grounds, to paraphrase their argument, that you don't spend your time at the wedding talking about divorce. They wanted this to be a test ban treaty, and not to go on about how you can get out of it, and under what conditions. The language we had proposed went into some detail as to certain types of acts done by people who are parties or who are not parties. We couldn't figure out what their motive was. Here's where my theory and Governor Harriman's theory conflicted that first night, before I found out later that he was more right. I thought it was because the Soviets take the view that any treaty, when the conditions become overwhelming, can be terminated and that you don't need a withdrawal clause saying so. I understand that this is not necessarily consistent with what some of their lawyers say at international conventions. But nevertheless, this is obviously the viewpoint they were expounding at the table. You don't have to say that you can withdraw, within the piece of paper, in order to have the right to withdraw. Harriman's point was that there's something else eating on them, and it has something to do with the Chinese. The substitute language that we presented which didn't talk about divorce but rather, talked about marriage, said, "all nations are invited to join this treaty." Then inserted at some point was, "However, if anybody, whether a member or not a member, violates the terms of this treaty, then it was terminated." It was much more of a friendly propaganda-type piece of paper. And still they exploded on this. The Soviets just would not touch it. Then we began to suspect that the trouble was the reference to nations not parties to the treaty, because this looked as if it put the finger on China. I don't recall what language we ended up with in the withdrawal clause. Do you have it?

Q. Yes. I quote: "Each party shall, on exercising its national sovereignty, have the right to withdraw from the treaty if it decides that extraordinary events related to the subject matter of this treaty have jeopardized the supreme interests of its country."

A. We got all reference to nonparties removed, and once that was removed, the difficulty was largely removed. This was the only time, in connection with this clause, that Harriman flat-out said, "We might as well not talk about a treaty without a withdrawal clause." Always elsewhere he was pliant. He was willing to discuss, but he laid this right on the table. He was chided about this later on. Gromyko would say, "It's not customary in negotiations to deliver ultimatums." It is interesting to note that the withdrawal clause the Soviets came in with was one that the Defense Department would have approved immediately. And that is, that any country in the interest of its national sovereignty could withdraw when it feels like it. The Chiefs, at least, would have approved that very quickly. The United States Government was proposing a more limited one. Do we have a notice provision in there?

Q. Yes, there is a notice. Notice of such withdrawals of all other parties to the treaty shall be given three months in advance.

A. Our thought here was to do our best to put a political restraint on them against the surprise thing they'd done to us in the fall of 1961. So if they broke the treaty, and if they did it by surprise, at least they would pay the penalty of having done it in the face of this provision. Then too, they might not do it in the face of the provision. They might give three months notice. Especially with our preparedness provisions, this would help us out. You had another issue, I believe. What was it?

Q. Yes, the trade-off of peaceful uses and withdrawal.

A. There was a trade-off, but it was not a logical trade-off. It was just one where Harriman decided that he would package the two and would not give in on the peaceful uses point until they'd given in on the withdrawal clause. It became a little hard to do because everyone knew that we'd folded on the peaceful uses point. But the American side kept doing drafts which kept the peaceful uses clause in it until they finally agreed on the withdrawal clause.

Q. Getting back to banning the bomb, you were instructed later to make a statement in the negotiations that you did not construe the draft as banning the use of nuclear weapons in time of war?

A. Yes. Although my cable didn't go out, we'd heard nothing from Washington on this point for 24 hours or so. Then a cable came in obviously written by someone other than the President, saying, in effect,

"We are concerned that this will be construed as banning the use of nuclear weapons during war; it is important that this construction not be read into the treaty; therefore, it is important that you make the following statement to Mr. Gromyko to make perfectly clear what our interpretation of this language is." And it may have gone on to say, "If he won't accept this, then you must change the language." But then it had a little paragraph stuck on the end saying, "If you decide you don't want to do this, don't do it." The President had obviously added this final paragraph. But then the next day, 24 hours later, in came another cable. I can just imagine what was going on in Washington at this time. It said, "Sorry to have to back down, but you must make this statement." In other words, it gave Harriman flat out instructions to make the statement. This must have all been done on the 25th, the last day, in which everything ended up falling into place. We ran into one more issue at this time -- unfortunately, my notes for that day are not as good as they should be -- the question of who the depositary governments should be. This was a fairly simple proposition in the original draft because we only had one depositary. But it turned out that in order to be big about this, we decided to offer the Soviets three different alternatives. They had a simple alternative. Let Moscow be the depositary -- simple, straight-forward sort of thing. I didn't see the booby traps in that one, but we didn't agree to it, and Washington came back and said, give them three alternatives. One of them was that you pick a neutral country, I think this meant Austria.

Q. It might have meant Switzerland.

A. The second one was to have all three original signatories.

Q. The third one was to have the UN?

A. Yes. The Soviets, after a little protesting, ended up picking all three original signatories. It then turned out that when we'd substituted the three depositaries for one in the text, it became a little complicated. If you had the Russians recognizing certain countries and refusing the signatures of certain countries, and us recognizing other countries and refusing the signatures of certain countries, how do you know who has subscribed to the test ban, and how do you know what numbers are required to amend the test ban?

Hailsham got off on a real kick on this one as to the combinations and permutations that it might cause. My position with Harriman on this question of how you amend it and whether you have enough to do so was that it may be a problem but the chances are slim so let's not worry about it.

Here the word "China" raised its head again. The Russians could look at North Vietnam and South Vietnam, North Korea and South Korea, and East Germany and West Germany, in one way or another, but they couldn't look at Taiwan as anything. It just didn't exist. As it turned out, Butch, without knowing he was fanning the flame, said, "If you recognized the signature of East Germany, we would not construe this as having any bearing whatsoever on our recognition of East Germany. On the other hand, we would assume that that regime that called itself East Germany had chosen to subscribe to the test ban and that was all right with us. Similarly, if we got the signature of Taiwan, or Nationalist China, or the Republic of China, as we call it, we'd consider it the same sort of thing." Well, China just exploded them. They wouldn't have anything to do with it. If the signature came into Washington from Nationalist China, and we sent a notice to Moscow, they wouldn't accept the letter. You couldn't put it under the door and you couldn't put it in the mail box. The piece of paper just didn't exist. This was a very sensitive subject. But we got instructions the morning of the 25th which told us that this position had to be negotiated. We were to tell the Soviets the signatures had to be recognized in such and such a way, and that notice had to be transmitted. I don't recall exactly what the instructions were on that day. Do you, George?

Q. The instruction had to do with how each capital would handle the accession or signature. We wanted the statement made clear that if there was a signature in Moscow by East Germany, there didn't have to be one in Washington or London, but we would regard the East Germans as having made a promise to the Russians that they would comply with the test ban.

A. All right. Now, let me read the letter that we wrote the morning of the 25th to comply with these instructions. This is an "un-letter," for reasons I'll explain in a moment. It is dated "Moscow, July 25, 1963," and signed by Harriman.

"Dear Mr. Gromyko,

This letter is for the purpose of dealing with the problem which may arise where one or more of the depositary governments does not recognize a government or regime which wishes to deposit an instrument of ratification or accession under Article 3, paragraph 2. It is understood that under these circumstances the instrument may be deposited with the depositary governments which do recognize the government or regime and a certified copy sent to the other depositary governments."

Now let me interrupt for a moment. This would mean, then, that East Germany could send a certified copy to us. It doesn't say who sends it. It says, "and a certified copy sent." I presume this means by the fellow subscribing. It could mean by the depositary government.

Q. I think the latter, but go ahead.

A. "On the other hand, there may be exceptional circumstances in which one or more of the depositary governments does not wish to accept, or otherwise recognize, the instrument. In such a case, a deposit by such a government or regime will constitute a ratification of or accession to the treaty, and will bind the depositing government or regime. It is further understood that acceptance by a depositary government of a deposit by such a government or regime in no way affects the issue of recognition granted by any party to such a government or regime."

As I read it, this meant that if East Germany wanted to accede, it could go to Moscow and accede, and either it or Moscow send a copy to London and Washington. If London and Washington did not wish to accept the notification, now this says, "a deposit by such a government or regime will constitute a ratification of or accession to the treaty, and will bind the depositing government or regime."

In my own notes here I have pencil marks around the words, "constitute a ratification of or accession to the treaty," which would leave the sentence -- if my editing had prevailed, which it did not -- to read, "In such a case, a deposit by such a government or regime will bind the depositing government or regime," without talking about whether they'd acceded or not acceded.

This piece of paper went to Gromyko. It was handed to Zorin by Kohler, Thursday A.M., July 25, 1963.

Q. There was another meeting after that?

A. We arrived at the regular meeting that day. They had a reply in hand. According to my notes, their reply said the USSR will in no way admit the existence of Chiang Kai-shek. In effect, what it said is just flat out "no." I think my bracketed language -- if we'd taken it out -- might have done it. Then Harriman asked the Soviets to take back their letter. This went on back and forth for awhile and finally they withdrew their letter and we withdrew ours. These were converted into talking papers for the two sides. Now, this issue was not yet decided, because we still had our instructions and the Soviets were still adamant on their point. According to my notes, Gromyko said if Chiang were to deposit with the U.S. and U.K. he had no argument, but there should be no public statement made.

Q. That was the subject, was it not, of the telephone call?

A. That was the subject of the call. My notes show that our meeting that day started at 4:35 p.m., and they immediately recessed into a small group to talk about this. (I have Akalorsky's translation notes here as to what went on.) The plenary meeting was resumed two hours later at 6:40 p.m. It was here that I became aware that Butch Fisher and Carl Kaysen had a bet of ten rubles on whether the treaty would be initialled that day. Butch bet we would not be able to sew it up that day and Carl bet that we would. Carl, in anticipation of problems, had arranged for a telephone line from the Spiridonovka House to the Situation Room in the White House, just in case.

Let me bring up another point here. Although the telephone conversation related to that point, we do have Harriman making the statement with respect to Article I on the banning of the use of nuclear weapons during war. He did make the statement. Here is Harriman's report on this to Washington: "I gave Gromyko the statement. Gromyko looked baffled." In connection with the word "baffled," we spent 30 minutes in our meeting that night trying to think of a word. Harriman was upset by this instruction. He felt that it was insane to think that anyone would construe Article I as barring the use of nuclear weapons in anger. So we'd look for a word -- he got to blow off steam at these meetings with us -- and he would suggest: "Gromyko was flabbergasted, and rightly so." We ended up with the word "baffled." Harriman cherished this word. It pleased him very much. He read this sentence over and over to himself. Then Harriman's report quoted Gromyko as saying: "This treaty deals with the prohibition of nuclear tests in three environments. Of course, it is not a prohibition of nuclear weapons, or weapons in general, although the USSR is in favor of general and complete disarmament. The scope of the treaty is self-explanatory." So Gromyko, who was baffled by the fact the point had been raised at all, got the point immediately and the point was closed.

Now back to the question of the telephone conversation. We had a recess at 6:41 p.m. to make a phone call. After the private meeting, we returned to the conference table. Harriman said, "Mr. Gromyko, we must recess until tomorrow, till we can get this issue checked through to Washington." This was because it looked as if we might have worked out an arrangement, on the basis that if we had no public statements as to accessions, and if Russia did not have to accept any notifications or admit that there's any accession by a country, they would be willing to let us treat somebody any way we wanted to. So it looked as if this could be worked out. This was something that Carl Kaysen and I had worked on with Butch to work out some language that might be acceptable. But we had to send it back to Washington. So Harriman came in, as I say, at 6:40, and told Gromyko we had to recess until tomorrow.

We had newspapermen stacked up outside at the gate of the Spiridonovka House; they'd been waiting for hours for this thing to be initialled. And

Butch and Carl Kaysen had a ten ruble bet, which was around eleven dollars. Carl whispered to Governor Harriman that maybe we ought to telephone Washington and find out if it's all right. And Harriman said, "What? What?" He's hard of hearing; he has one bad ear. And Carl said, "Perhaps we should telephone Washington." Harriman said, "All right, we'll telephone Washington." We trooped out of the room and went to the telephone. At 7:07, twenty-six minutes later, the call had been completed. Carl had spoken to Mac Bundy in the Situation Room, and the President was there too.

Ormsby-Gore was there too, because the President was trying to get through to Macmillan, I think to return his call. Macmillan had just heard from Hailsham that Harriman was being too sticky on some points and that the United States was not being reasonable, and we were going to blow the whole thing. Macmillan was going to protest to the President and ask him to get work to Harriman giving him some new instructions which permitted him to sign a reasonable agreement. But for some reason they couldn't get through. By accident at this moment, which might have been 9 or 10 in the morning here, this call came into the Situation Room and the text settlement was read over the phone. Kaysen talked to McGeorge Bundy, saying, "In the case of an unrecognized regime, any regime may deposit with any depositary, which in turn may send notice to others. If notice is accepted, there is a binding accession. But no depositary is bound to accept notice. If the notice is not accepted, the obligation by the depositor and the depositary is valid. It is agreed that if notice is refused, no further comment will be made by the party refusing notice or by any other party." Kaysen then told Mac that this was an oral understanding which had been fully explained and discussed between Gromyko, Harriman, and Hailsham. He said that it was agreed by the three present that the Governor was free to present this to the President, and to explain it in any way that seemed appropriate to the Senate at the ratification. It was understood that he'd have to explain this, and it was agreed that this was all right.

So this is the deal that was made over the phone. Then Harriman walked back to the meeting and made some very cavalier remark like, "Well, where's the treaty we're supposed to sign," and the Russians looked up and wondered what this was about. Then it became clear that the clouds had parted and the sun had come through. "Because of your statement," says Harriman, "we can go ahead to initial and sign and ratify. Thanks for the clarity with which we've had our talks." Then Gromyko made a few nice remarks thanking him for his efforts and understanding, and Harriman thanked Carl Kaysen and the telephone operator. He said that he'd already told Washington that he was going to go ahead and initial it at that time. Then they had a little debate about when they should release the news there in town. Trevelyan wanted to put it off until eight o'clock but they decided to get it out right away.

Q. Had you, at this point, negotiated the press release on the Non-Aggression Pact also?

A. That was all part of the package. The initialling was concluded at 7:20 p.m. The newspaper people were brought in and were taking pictures. I remember that when Harriman started to do his initialling at the bottom of the paper, he reached over and got Butch's pen and initialled one sheet, then he reached over and got somebody else's pen. I was using one of these three-color pens and I'd just run out of blue ink. I was writing in red at this point. Nevertheless, I pushed the old blue ink ball point back down again, figuring it was going to give him enough ink for his initials, and gave it to him. He initialled one copy with my pen. It had just enough ink for his initials. I still have that pen.

Just as an item of interest, when we typed up the treaty to be signed, we didn't have enough room at the bottom for the U.S. Senators to add their signatures, and we knew that the U.S. Senators were going to accompany Secretary Rusk over there. It was not clear that they were going to sign, but they might sign. I thought that it'd be very bad politics to have to attach another piece of paper for their signatures, so I asked them to retype the treaty.

Q. To leave space?

A. Tightening it up a few lines to leave space, which they did. So you'll find that the actual treaty, although the Senators ended up by not signing, has enough space for their signatures on it. I have in my own possession the copy that otherwise would have been signed, had we known the facts, which has barely enough room for Rusk's, Home's and Gromyko's signatures at the bottom. I think that's about it except for the ratification battle, which was not as uphill as it might have been.

Q. Did you meet with the President when you came back?

A. We returned by way of Otis Air Force Base, Massachusetts. The President was on vacation at Hyannis Port. The last night in Moscow, we had dinner out at one of the restaurants. Then we took cars to the airport, on Saturday the 27th. We made a stop-off at Copenhagen where Bill Blair, our Ambassador, gave us a quick tour.

Q. Did you see Khrushchev again before you left?

A. Harriman did. He went back to see him, but I did not. It was three o'clock in the afternoon on a Friday, the 26th, that Harriman, Kohler and Kaysen went to see Khrushchev for the final time. Then on the 27th we flew back. We arrived at Otis Air Force Base at 2:30 Saturday afternoon. Harriman had a big bucket of caviar for the President and he made it perfectly clear that if there was any possibility that the President didn't like caviar, he wanted to know about it immediately -- he was going to take it with him, rather than leaving it with the President. The President did like it. We left Otis at three o'clock that same day and arrived at Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland, an hour later.

Q. Did you see the President at Hyannis Port at that time?

A. No. Harriman got off there and went to see the President. What happened next was that Secretary Rusk went over to sign it -- it wasn't really a treaty yet. Then we had a treaty-signing ceremony at the State Department in which Secretary Rusk made a signing right outside his office. This was in October, after the ratification.

Q. The instrument of ratification was deposited October 10th.

A. The only discussion I had with the President on the ratification was when he called me at my office when Mac Bundy was away and I was in charge of figuring out how to handle Senator Jackson's offensive. Jackson was insistent that we have some tight safeguards. We were equally insistent, but he was doubling up on us, paralleling us in this effort. So I was in charge for that period of time of seeing that we were prepared full steam to meet these safeguards. The President called me once to ask how we stood on it. The ratification problem revolved largely around Jackson. And the Stennis hearings were going on at the same time as the Fulbright hearings, because Stennis was looking hard at the military aspects of this, we were focusing very much on these problems.

Q. Jackson controlled 10 or 11 votes, as a matter of fact.

A. Well, you knew that much better than I. I just knew that having him come out in favor of the ratification was very important. He ended up doing this and so did Stuart Symington, although a number of members of the Armed Services Subcommittee voted against it, though not vigorously.

Q. Even Senator Russell didn't declare war on it. I think that covers the test ban pretty well. We might go back briefly and talk a little about general and complete disarmament, starting with the trip to Moscow that you made in 1961.

A. I think probably Bill Foster arranged for me to be invited from the Defense Department. This was while I was Deputy Assistant Secretary and I went with Butch and the others.

Q. Do you have any recollection of the President's feeling about that?

A. No. As I recall, I don't think there ever was any feeling on the part of the President that you could really negotiate a full scale disarmament agreement. He thought that all sorts of pressure ought to be put in that direction and whenever you got something useful falling out of it, such as a test ban or even internal restraints that are the product of the study that has to be done to create a disarmament proposal, the effort proved worthwhile. This way you'd end up behaving more rationally

and you'd end up getting an agreement here and there. It may be that he thought that something better than this could be gotten. I just don't know. His mood was one of vague push in that direction, but that's all I can recall at this time.

Q. Let's jump then to the consideration of what became the April 18, 1962, general and complete disarmament plan -- the Outline of the Provisions of a Draft Treaty on General and Complete Disarmament in a Peaceful World. Do you remember that? Or even before that, the September 25, 1961, plan, its predecessor, which President Kennedy tabled at the UN? You worked on that speech. Did you talk with the President at all during that period?

A. I did play a role with your people in drafting it and getting it processed through. I don't recall working with the President on it. In connection with the April, 1962, disarmament plan, I think this was the draft agreement in which there was a difference between the Arms Control Agency and the State Department on the one hand and Defense on the other as to the method of reduction.

Q. And production?

A. Mainly reduction. I don't recall the intricacies of the production end of it, but as to the reduction, there was a feeling on your side that reduction should be by large categories. You'd have heavy strategic weapons that you'd have to reduce 30 percent, let's say, and then you'd have a different package that was reduced 30 percent, and it allowed you to move back and forth within a given category with more flexibility. The Defense Department took the position that if you're going to shrink your armament capability, the only feasible way to deal with this, life being what it is and people being what they are, is to take 30 percent out of everybody's hide and you end up with 30 percent fewer B-47s and 30 percent fewer B-52s, each type right on down the line all cut 30 percent. This became simpler for the military to deal with, because if they had to play games about how you would get rid of Minutemen and not get rid of Polaris submarines, and get rid of one kind of aircraft but not another, you'd be playing games of a kind that would cause all sorts of inter-service rivalries and analytical problems. This could, however, conceive of a world in which the Soviets had 30 percent less of whatever they had and we had 30 percent less of whatever we had. And to me at least, this is not an impossible type of rearrangement. The President did decide to do it our way, as I remember, at that time.

Q. You were present at this meeting and Secretary McNamara was not. That was April 12th?

A. The Secretary was not there because the Shah of Iran was here and he and Lemnitzer were both entertaining the Shah. So I made the Defense presentation. I believe that both Foster and Rusk were at that meeting,

so I had big game to deal with. But, here again, I was confident that the President had already faced the issue before the meeting started. He must have dealt with it with Jerry Wiesner and Mac Bundy.

Q. What do you think his purpose was in having such a draft tabled? You said earlier you didn't think he really believed that there was much chance of a comprehensive disarmament agreement. Do you think he was perhaps looking at the first stage, as many other people were at that time?

A. I don't know if you can decide what a person really has in mind regarding this type of situation. It depends on how big you're willing to think. I mean, how horrible you think the future is likely to be if things are allowed to run their present course. It takes an enormous wrench to make the kind of changes that are involved, even in the first stage of one of these things. It's the sort of thing you would do after a catastrophe, after maybe three or four or five nuclear weapons got loose somewhere, or some madman did something which led you to think in really big terms. I never quite saw the President thinking you'd get down to stage three where you'd turn nuclear weapons over to the UN, if nuclear weapons are kept in the arsenal -- which, analytically, they would have to be. But I never could see this as a real life situation.

Q. So far as you knew, he never focused on stage three.

A. I don't think so. I think he was looking for something visionary to show the world. Then he tried to make the first stages about as big as we could digest. This is the way I thought he looked at it.

Q. The other thing I'd like to ask you about in that context was the plan which was known variously as the Foster Panel Plan and the ACDA Plan Number One. There were a couple of meetings on this plan in 1963. One was just before you went to Moscow. It was agreed at that time that Harriman had enough without any comprehensive disarmament proposal, or separable first stages, or anything like that.

A. This was an attempt to jump on the streetcar. Before Harriman left, the President bit the bullet. He said, "I'll take a comprehensive test ban." And I think he privately was willing to make concessions on on-site inspections -- not to get rid of them, but to cut them down in the neighborhood of something less than what we'd been talking about. We were talking about eight and they were talking about three.

But I think the President felt it was nonsense to have the numbers there. So he was willing, I think, to do something useful in this area, and he thought he had the opposition under control. But, to add on a new one as to which no consensus had been arrived at at all - namely, a separable reduction of strategic weapons such as the ACDA Plan One, which focused on reducing the strategic capability --

Q. Earlier?

A. Yes, and this was not merely a separable stage one, because you had

a separable stage one that did not prejudice the strategic capability. But I vaguely recall that there were attempts to get riders into this authority at that time. They fell off; they did not complicate the instructions.

Q. You don't remember any other discussions with the President that you might have had on the Foster Plan?

A. No, I don't think the Foster Plan at that time ever got anywhere.

Q. It didn't. It was discussed at various times. It came up and there wasn't any consensus and it went down again.

A. Well, it may end up being the paternal grandfather of something very useful in the near future.

Q. That's right. I just wondered if you'd got any sense of it in those discussions with the President?

A. No.

Q. What was your connection with the Hot Line?

A. My first connection with the Hot Line was in 1961 when I was in Moscow with McCloy. Helmut Sonnenfeldt [State Department] and I had conversations on the subject with Llewellyn Thompson, our Ambassador there. We probed his feelings about it and brought back his ideas. We were helping to push the Hot Line, but I was not in on the actual negotiations which gave birth to it, although the first equipment went over on Harriman's airplane in 1963.

Q. I wondered if you'd gotten any sense, when you were in Moscow working on the test ban, about the Hot Line, which had been agreed to just a few weeks or so before? Any sense that this was a reply to the Chinese? In other words, here are the Soviets, at a time when the Chinese are throwing brickbats, opening up a line of communication to the White House.

A. No. I felt nothing like that at all.

Q. The final thing I'd like to ask you about has to do with your various speeches. The copy I have is the one you gave to the Iowa American Assembly on May 25th, 1962, about non-negotiated arms control. That had in it the beginnings of the City Avoidance ideas that McNamara later made a speech about, and it carried forward some of the ideas that had been in President Kennedy's March 28, 1961, supplemental budget message, which probably went up before you came on the scene.

A. It was happening as I came on the scene.

Q. I wondered if, in that exercise, and you might say part of it was a reconciliation of Defense strategy with Arms Control, there'd been any discussions with the President in which you were involved? Did you have any sense of what his views were on that?

A. I don't recall the speech I made which you refer to, though I do recall one on a similar subject I gave in Michigan, which more or less straddled McNamara's speeches. The ideas that are in these speeches could be called simple military strategy. On the other hand, I have always construed them as very closely related to Arms Control, if not disarmament. Very frequently you find that what you can do yourself, if only putting safety catches on your shotguns, makes sense.

Q. Helps to reduce the risk of war?

A. And it serves the purpose of avoiding accidental explosions. Having better communications like the Hot Line means that we might be able to clarify some ambiguities under certain circumstances. I consider these all the business of Arms Control thinking. It deals with restraints; it doesn't necessarily mean you have to have a quid pro quo from the other guy. It may be that one way of keeping him from being trigger-happy is to have your missiles and submarines under the water. He knows that you can wait; that you're not in a hurry. So therefore he's not trigger-happy because he knows that you're not.

Q. Do you remember what the President's attitude was on that?

A. Indirectly, by way of Jerry Wiesner, Carl Kaysen, Secretary McNamara and others, I knew that he was very interested in this sort of thing. That doesn't mean that he conceived of it as a substitute for disarmament agreements. But he was very interested in allowing himself time to think. I'm sure this is why, for example, he got the Jupiter missiles out of Turkey. I was given the job of doing that.

Q.. Was this after Cuba?

A. It was after Cuba, because Cuba highlighted the problem. He'd got himself into an "eyeball to eyeball" confrontation which could have meant, if we'd been forced to strike some Soviet ships or submarines, a very serious risk of war. Then you get to the position where the question arises, "Is anyone going to use nuclear weapons?" And the Russians, looking at these very vulnerable missiles in Turkey and knowing that they were useless unless used very quickly, might be in a situation in which they are impelled or induced to take those missiles out. Then we find ourselves in a war, because of their vulnerability.

So the President and McNamara decided those missiles had to be changed for submarines. I was given the job of arranging to get submarines into the Mediterranean and to get these lightning-rod-like missiles out of both Italy and Turkey. And the result is, we have a better missile capability in the area but one in which there's no reason to think anyone would get jittery about our trigger-happiness. The President was very concerned about all this. Regarding the question of the City Avoidance strategy, which is really an option that you maintain for yourself, I'm not sure the President focused on that very much. I know he was anxious to have strategies in existence that permitted him not to hit cities. But I just don't know the extent to which he focused on strategic questions of that kind.

Q. Let me go back a little bit. I raised this question earlier with you. I know that while you were handling arms control problems, one of your constant concerns was to keep the Joint Chiefs of Staff informed; to get them on board if Defense decided to go ahead or give its approval to something. Did you ever get specific instructions from the President on that score?

A. I would not get them from the President. I would get them from McNamara. But this was a standing instruction here in the Defense Department.

Q. There wasn't any question about it?

A. No. There are questions as to at what level and with what degree of formality you do things. For example, the Chiefs themselves are dealt with exclusively by McNamara or the Deputy Secretary personally, with few exceptions. However, my staff worked with the Joint Staff all the time, and it's understood that on any major decision involving military affairs, the advice of the Joint Chiefs is to be heard. It's usually given to McNamara, but it is also usually communicated to the President by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, if there's any dissent whatsoever.

Q. Is there anything else that occurs to you about your relationship with President Kennedy and his interests and desires in this field?

A. No, I think that's it.

Q. This concludes the interview with John T. McNaughton on his experience with arms control and disarmament during the period 1961-1963.