

FOREWORD

Transcript Warning:

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Punctuation:

The following conventions are used throughout the transcripts:

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

Names:

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

Preparation:

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

Papers of John F. Kennedy

Presidential Recordings

Dictabelts

Dictabelt 20A

Conversation #1: President Kennedy and Dean Rusk

May 27, 1963, 10:15 a.m.

President: Hello.

Sec. Rusk: Mr. President.

President: Yes, yes.

Sec. Rusk: Mr. President, I just want to put in your . . . in the back of your mind for a day or two, before I can talk it over with you, the need for some very discrete but a . . . and contingency planning on the Pope's [John XXIII] serious illness.

President: Yes, we were just talking about it right now. Because evidently some stories put out about the Vatican sources said my trip had been suspended . . . on my visit to the Vatican.

Sec. Rusk: We have that particular point and we also then in the event of a funeral, we must think who leads the delegation. [John] Foster Dulles led the one before. But I think it would need to be either the Vice President or myself.

President: Right.

Sec. Rusk: But then the other members of the delegation are a matter of really great importance. And you would probably want to have one of your immediate staff concentrate on this with us for a little careful contingency planning.

President: Right, right.

Sec. Rusk: You might be thinking about who you would want to have and which of us you think might be better to go.

President: Right, right.

Sec. Rusk: I can see some advantages either way. But I will have a chance to talk to you about it.

President: Well, maybe you both could go or something.

Sec. Rusk: On the a . . . on the trip, I don't know where that story came from, but . . .

President: It said Vatican sources said our visit had been suspended.

Sec. Rusk: Well, I think it is probably, uh, it looks to me as though your visit is not likely to take place, but that is just a hunch. As far as the Pope is concerned.

President: Here it is. "Plans for President Kennedy audience with Pope John has been suspended because of the Pontiffs illness." Well, now, that a . . . "Plans will be made pending clarification." I don't know whether . . . we have no other information about his health except the newspaper reports, have we?

Sec. Rusk: No, I don't think so.

President: Well, it just depends. If he should . . . if something should happen . . . It seems to me that what I would do would be, if something happened to him before I am going they will have picked a new Pope.

Sec. Rusk: The selection might not occur that quickly.

President: Well, then I would think what I would do is just put my Italian visit at the end of my Irish visit.

Sec. Rusk: Right.

President: And just do it that way.

Sec. Rusk: Right. Right. I think Bill Tyler will work with me personally on this whole business so that no one else will be involved in it. And is Kenny O'Donnell the fellow you want to work on it?

President: Well, fine, good.

Sec. Rusk: O.K.

President: Thank you.