

FOREWORD

Transcript Warning:

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

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Punctuation:

The following conventions are used throughout the transcripts:

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

Names:

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

Preparation:

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

Papers of John F. Kennedy

Presidential Recordings

Dictabelts

Dictabelt 26A

Conversation #1: President Kennedy and Dean Rusk

August 16, 1963

10:15 A.M.

Sec Rusk: I am in a press conference in 30 minutes. I will get a question on France. I am inclined just to limit myself to Article One, paragraph Two, under which we would not be able to give any help to anybody carrying on explosions.

President: What does it say; that article?

Sec Rusk: It says, "undertakes furthermore to refrain from causing, encouraging or in any way participating in the carrying out of any nuclear weapons test explosion or any other nuclear explosion prohibited by this treaty."

President: Well, I think that obviously we would not give them aid if . . . I mean that would . . .

Sec Rusk: I mean this would be a violation of the treaty if we uh, I think I will just stay with that and say I am not . . .

President: Why don't you generalize it and not make it just sort of France.

Sec Rusk: That's right. That's right.

President: So that it doesn't look like you are just talking about France.

Sec Rusk: That is right. Now if they press me on France, I will say well President DeGaulle . . . I might say President DeGaulle in his press conference referred to this question as quite hypothetical and I think I would leave it at that.

President: Yea, ok, fine. Listen I wrote you a note about going up to [Camp] David, when are you going?

Sec Rusk: Yes, I am going up Monday morning I think.

President: Oh that is fine.

Sec Rusk: Looking forward to it.

President: Oh it is very nice there. Thank you.

Sec Rusk: Thank you, I appreciate it.

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Presidential Recordings

Dictabelts

Dictabelt 26A

Conversation #1A: Evelyn Lincoln & White House Operator

Lincoln: Hello?

Operator: Mrs. Lincoln?

Lincoln: Yes.

Operator: Good morning. Would you like a few calls?

Lincoln: Alright.

Operator: There aren't so many. The last one I see was given to you was the President for Mrs. Kennedy. Then at seven twenty-one the Attorney General called the President. Seven twenty-four, Mr. Bundy called. Seven twenty-eight, the President called Mr. Steven Smith at West Hampton, Long Island. He was out, and returned the call at eight twenty-five. Then, the President called him back again at eight twenty-eight.

Lincoln: *[indistinct]* That's ok.

Operator: Eight fifty-eight, he called Dave Powers. At nine o'clock Dave Powers called the President back.

Lincoln: O.K.

Operator: Alrighty. Bye.

Lincoln: Bye.

[disconnect]

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Dictabelt 26A

Conversation #2: President Kennedy and Vice President

August 16, 1963

1:00 P.M.

President: ----- situation you know, we got a vacancy here.

Vice President: Yes.

President: I was thinking of [Raymond] Telles, what do you think?

Vice President: Who?

President: Our Ambassador to Costa Rica; Mexican.

Vice President: Mr. President, I don't know a thing in the world about his administrative ability. He was a good mayor . . .

President: Yeah.

Vice President: . . . and I hear good reports on him in Costa Rica.

President: Yeah.

Vice President: But as an administrator, I just don't know.

President: Yeah.

Vice President: He is a good man and I would think uh, I would have to question about his real intellectual power. Whether he has what you want. But . . . really need to do something for that group. And it would set mighty well with the Latin Americans. Now California feels mighty left out.

President: Yeah.

Vice President: They think Texas has gotten off with more than they are entitled to because of _____ and the Latin Americans judge and the Latin American District Attorneys. They feel like we have let them down and they have got a good many recommendations. But I would heartily approve of it so far as clearing him and liking him and things like that. I don't know him well enough to know that he is Cabinet material. I would have a question about that.

President: Well, I think probably of all that group he is probably the only one that could be considered for it. Of course he has the outstanding record. Most of them uh, you know we are pretty hard put to find judges that you can clear and so on. So that if we are going to get a Mexican it looks to me like he is the fellow. The question really is we don't have much else to pick from that I can see. I haven't heard any other name.

Vice President: It may be. If Bobby doesn't know some top Latin American in California, I tried to get them to suggest to me this last week some top people that we could just be positive of. They said that they would get them together but they haven't. They have a million Latin Americans in Los Angeles.

President: I know, I know. That is one of the reasons why we are thinking about this fellow.

Vice President: Now they will be jealous of Texas. Those people will be.

President: This won't please them you mean.

Vice President: No, it will irritate them. I am just playing straight with you because I spent two days with them.

President: Well would it irritate them uh, they would feel better if we didn't appoint a Latin. Is that it?

Vice President: Not unless you had one of theirs. What they feel is uh, these damn groups I never saw them feel so bitter. But the Polish groups and Mexican groups. Now California feels that they have 42 percent of the Mexican population in the United States. That they don't have one single appointment.

President: Yeah.

Vice President: Now I have proved to them that they the Latins in the United States have only 1.2 percent of the jobs and of the total population and Kennedy has given

them 2.2 percent of the jobs and he has given them twice as many of the jobs than their population would entitle them to.

President: Yeah.

Vice President: And in California they have 10 percent of the California population and he has given them 8 percent of the jobs_which is a mighty good record.

President: Yeah.

Vice President: But they are bitter because they have no judge, and no cabinet, and no under cabinet, and no anything. And they tell me the real reason Mrs. [Rosaline] Wyman and some of the other people tell me is that they just haven't had anybody emerge as quality material. Now Bartley maybe ought to see who his contacts are out there; I'd just been out there for two days; and I have no political thing and if I could think I would give consideration in trying to appoint a top flight Mexican from California. If you couldn't then maybe you would take Telles. I would be happy for Telles. It would be a feather in my crown, but I am thinking about you and the California situation. Because that is one state we have just got to carry.

President: That is right. Well I think I will go back on this matter.

Vice President: You just count me in, whatever you want to do as being strong for it. But I think I ought to raise it.

President: No I don't think there is any sense in that really I was thinking of California and of course Texas, Mexicans as the two areas, with California uh, I was just looking at the figures of 1960, one million five hundred thousand. So it must be up by now and if this is going to irritate them, rather than make them happy, well we certainly want to take another look at it.

Vice President: Here is what they said to me when I told them that President Kennedy has named two Ambassadors, one from California and one from Texas. They said well we know you got Texas, one Ambassador we never heard of, the one to Togo.

President: The one to where, Togo, yea.

Vice President: Yea, I don't know who he is. Then I said well he has named so many Assistant District Attorney's. He has named one Federal Judge. He has done more than any President has ever done before. I did this in answer to their vicious criticism. And I handle it very well I think but they kept

coming back, oh yes, but our recommendations in California have been ignored.

President: Well you see [Clair] Engle vetoed that Judge about a year and a half ago which was a bad mistake but however. Well anyway I will check back to see if they have got anybody out there and then I will see whether our investigation uh, wh don't have anybody else particularly in mind. I will be back in touch with you.

Vice President: Right and thank you and I will see you Monday.

President: Ok.

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Dictabelt 26A

Conversation #3: President Kennedy and George Ball

August 19, 1963

10:35 A.M.

President: Hello George.

Mr. Ball: Hello Mr. President I am sorry, I was down at the War College.

President: No, that is alright. George, let's see, first, there is an article by a fellow called George Weller on Greek shipping this morning which is rather annoying. But it is about this shipping to Cuba and who uh.

Mr. Ball: Is that in the Times?

President: Yea, it is in the Post, and who is doing it. And it makes reference to Paul Rogers' amendment. But I suppose it is to cut off assistance to any country is it.

Mr. Ball: *[talking to someone in the background]*. Alex Johnson was just here and I was just asking him about it.

President: What is it?

Mr. Ball: Yea, it cuts off aid to countries that ship to Cuba.

President: I think that we ought to have something for this press conference tomorrow. I don't know whether uh, about where we are with that. I am sure that I am going to be asked about it as well as this thing is very provocative.

Mr. Ball: We got people working it up for you and we will have it for you this afternoon.

President: You might read Weller and see what our attitude ought to be on the Rogers amendment. That is going to pass; the Rogers amendment I am sure. I don't see how they can lick it, things being as they are.

Mr. Ball: We will cover that for you.

President: Yea, and you might want to talk to the Hill people, and O'Brien about the Rogers amendment. And I should think particularly after the Weller article that is going to help it very much. Now I talked to O'Brien on Bokaro again and they are still around with Bloomfield. You don't have any different thoughts than the ones discussed the other day do you.

Mr. Ball: No, I thought we came out at the right point if we could work that out that way. What does Larry think?

President: Well they were up there and they didn't know whether they could uh, what he was concerned about was that if Bloomfield kept his present language somebody would offer a substitute to make it 50 million and that might pass. And number two that uh, well I think our decision the other day is we just kill Bokaro itself.

Mr. Ball: That is right. I think to the extent we can focus it on that. We don't get involved with this _____ which could uh.

President: No, of course it makes our situation I guess in India more complicated.

Mr. Ball: Well I think that is right although to the extent that we can disassociate you and the executive department. Have to put the blame on Congress. Tell them they are going to uh.

President: Right, ok, fine. The other thing was I talked to Davis this morning about that Stelle business.

Mr. Ball: I got a telegram off last night to George McGee on it.

President: I saw that one. I just want to be sure that Stelle wasn't going on his own sort of pace because this isn't the time we want to agree with anything with the Russians.

Mr. Ball: No, all he was really doing was to try to smoke him out on what they had in mind on this observation.

President: It was worded badly I think.

Mr. Ball: It was worded to the extent that he said he would accept the static observation post without advance notification. I think it may have gone a little further than it should have. But we are running that down and see if there was a basis for it. In any event this whole thing is coming up on Wednesday in that, in Paris the Germans will have a full opportunity to express themselves there.

President: I got a letter from [Konrad] Adenauer. Did you see that letter?

Mr. Ball: Yea, and we got an answer for you uh, a suggested answer which we are sending over.

President: May not need an answer.

Mr. Ball: Well Adenauer leaves today for _____ you know. So I think it will be quieted down for a little while.

President: The other question is whether we ought to uh, about those troops. Do you have any further thoughts about those?

Mr. Ball: You probably saw the incoming indicating that [Willy] Brandt had said this thing was discussed with the cabinet. That Adenauer hadn't understood it. That Brandt made a full explanation. And that Adenauer seemed not to be absolutely happy. And that [Erhardt] Schroder has said that there was no problem and that he was prepared to go along. Now what created this last problem was that at the Secretary's press conference, they asked a silly question about a 10 percent reduction in Germany.

President: Yeah.

Mr. Ball: And he said no there was no such thing contemplated. And this was interpreted in Germany meaning there was no 10 percent reduction in Berlin contemplated. That question was asked the wrong way. But that is all cleared up and with Adenauer going away and nobody else concerned about it. Brandt happy and Schroder happy I'd be inclined just to leave it.

President: Ok, good. Thank you, right.

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Dictabelt 26A

Conversation #4: President Kennedy and Robert F. Kennedy

President: Hello . . . hello . . . hello . . .

RFK: Hello?

President: Hello.

RFK: I thought we might go over this section with you. Uh, you know it's gonna be a lot of important--before we talk to [Mike] Mansfield . . .

President: I know so damn little about it other than what I read this morning . . .

RFK: Well I'd just like to ha--make sure you understand that full, uh . . .

President: Yeah.

RFK: . . . implications. Could we come over . . .

President: Yeah.

RFK: . . . for about ten minutes?

President: O.K. Right now.

RFK: Right now?

JFK: Right.

[disconnect]

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Presidential Recordings

Dictabelts

Dictabelt 26A

Conversation #5: President Kennedy and Unidentified Man

President: Yeah?

U/I: I suspect it's gonna be the first . . . [*much surface noise; voice is indistinct, then fades; surface noise takes over and voice can't be heard at all; tape ends shortly thereafter.*]

[repeated at beginning of 26B]