

FOREWORD

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Punctuation:

The following conventions are used throughout the transcripts:

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

Names:

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

Preparation:

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

Dictabelt 25C, Item 25C1

August 12, 1963

JFK:¹ . . . Preparedness Committee.² Now, uh, I will call you back but I just wanted to, uh, and find out whether we can get some, uh . . . Evidently they're working on a policy statement which we might have available for submission to the committee for Wednesday morning and therefore released to the press and they would then, the Chiefs³ would then come before the Foreign Relations Committee to explain it, a little later. But at least we would have the news story out in any good fashion rather than some leak out of that committee.

Mansfield:⁴ Yes, but then would, would that mean then that the Chiefs would go before Stennis's⁵ committee first?

JFK: Under this, under, if we can get a good policy thing . . .

Mansfield: Yes.

JFK: . . . and, and release it to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for release . . .

Mansfield: And that would include Taylor?⁶

JFK: That would include Taylor. Under that, uh, under that that would be, uh, our way it seems to me, the only way we can protect ourselves.

Mansfield: Well, uh, okay.

JFK: Let me call you back before we come to any conclusion on it. But I think you should, uh, realize in talking to Stennis or anybody that he, he had no agreement with anybody.

Mansfield: Well, I . . .

¹ Continued from Belt 25B, Item 25B2.

² Subcommittee on Preparedness Investigation of the Senate Committee on Armed Services.

³ Joint Chiefs of Staff.

⁴ Mike Mansfield, senator from Montana.

⁵ John Stennis, senator from Mississippi.

⁶ General Maxwell D. Taylor, chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff.

JFK: On the, except that Max Taylor would be there the fourteenth. And I have no objection to his having the Chiefs. What I do object to his saying that, uh, he had an understanding that they would come there before they went to the Foreign Relations Committee. Because that, he never had that understanding.

Mansfield: Well, no, but he sort of, uh, feels I suppose due to committee pressure that the ground is being cut out from under him and he's been most patient and been most considerate. But this is something that's, that he feels because of pressure from within.

JFK: Yeah, well this is bigger than, than Stennis.

Mansfield: [Words unintelligible] look like part of a set up.

JFK: Yeah, well that was a part of it. I haven't seen the way it was worded, but I was, uh, for the reasons that I've given you, you see the Chiefs has always been our problem . . .

Mansfield: Yeah.

JFK: . . . and, uh, because you know, and especially if they get into that kind of committee set up and then you just, and then you got Barry Goldwater⁷ asking a lot of questions. They got Teller⁸ up there today. I mean it shows what their proceedings are 1-, going to be like.

Mansfield: Well, I, I, I told Stennis, I said, "The reason that we want to delay this is because, so that the committee can have, uh, the Foreign Relations Committee if this treaty is signed will have a chance to consider the limited test ban whereas your committee covers the comprehensive test, but you know as well as I do that, uh, this is going to be the main subject, not the comprehensive tr- . . ." Well, he said, "I know that," he said, "I'm willing to wait and let it go." But he's got pressure from his own people in the meantime. They've used this, this cablegram, uh, to indicate that some attempt is being, to undercut them. Jackson⁹ is not being very good in his speeches, I must say.

JFK: He most certainly isn't.

Mansfield: And, uh. . . .

JFK: But that's all right we just have to fight it out.

⁷ Barry Goldwater, senator from Arizona.

⁸ Dr. Edward Teller, physicist.

⁹ Henry M. Jackson, senator from Washington.

Mansfield: Well, he'll come along.

JFK: However, but I, let me just check back with you Mike after I find out what the Chiefs could do in the way of a policy paper today.

Mansfield: Well, now, uh, pardon me for asking but how soon will you be calling back. I just wondered, because I'm, I'm going to go home if it's going to be a little while.

JFK: Yeah, I'll call you back at home.

Mansfield: Okay, Mr. President . . .

JFK: Thank you.

Mansfield: . . . think it over carefully.

JFK: Okay.

Mansfield: Because we want the votes on that committee if we can get 'em.

JFK: Yeah, what I'll, all I'd like to do is bac-, is get the Chiefs on a public record before it can be leaked out to, which I'm afraid it would be Wednesday afternoon that the Chiefs has grave reservations about this treaty. Which is what I'm afraid would come out of the Stennis committee.

Mansfield: Now is, I understand also that Taylor's supposed to come up with McNamara¹⁰ tomorrow.

JFK: Well, that's what I'm going to check on.

Mansfield: You better be careful on that.

JFK: Yeah, well that, you see, this we may not do. . . . We may attempt to do both things. To give Stennis what he wants of having the Chiefs coming first there, but have the Chiefs' public statement for release Wednesday. If we've got that then I would have no objections to their going to this private committee.

Mansfield: No, that'd be all right then.

¹⁰ Robert S. McNamara, secretary of defense.

JFK: But that's what I'm going to try to find out if they can get us a paper today that could be released Wednesday morning to Fulbright.¹¹

Mansfield: But the one thing we wa-, want to get are the votes and . . .

JFK: Yeah.

Mansfield: . . . as I indicated in that memorandum . . .

JFK: But you see what, what I'm afraid of is that w-, that, see any one of those senators can leak what they want . . .

Mansfield: Right.

JFK: . . . out of the Preparedness Committee.

Mansfield: That's right.

JFK: So then we'll be . . .

Mansfield: And they will.

JFK: And they will.

Mansfield: Yeah.

JFK: So we would need, if we didn't have a paper for release on Wednesday, we would need the Chiefs before the Foreign Relations Committee on Thursday. Now he hasn't any right to have 'em more than one day.

Mansfield: Well, he could finish them.

JFK: Yeah.

Mansfield: But, uh, if, if you're gonna work it that way, keep Taylor away from the Foreign Relations Committee tomorrow, too.

JFK: Yeah, okay.

¹¹ J. William Fulbright, senator from Arkansas.

Mansfield: Go all the way with Stennis.

JFK: All right, I'll call you later, Mike.

Mansfield: Okay and I've talked to Sparkman¹² about this and any additional information, uh, he might be a good one to call too to, uh, he's very good.

JFK: Okay, fine.

Mansfield: Thank you.

JFK: Thank you, Mike.

¹² John J. Sparkman, senator from Alabama.