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Carl Kaysen, Interview #3, November 21 & 29, 2002

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Carl Kaysen Oral History Interview—JFK #3, 11/21/2002
Administrative Information

Creator: Carl Kaysen

Interviewer: Vicki Daitch

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Biographical Note

Carl Kaysen (1920-2010) was a Professor at Harvard University from 1946 to 1966; Deputy Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs from 1961 to 1963; and director at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton from 1966 to 1976. This interview focuses on Kaysen's role in the Kennedy administration, his evaluation of John F. Kennedy (JFK)'s presidency, and Kaysen's assessment of several of the foreign policy affairs that JFK encountered, among other issues.

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Signature Carl Kaysen

Date 4/4/03

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Oral History Interview

with

CARL KAYSEN

November 21, 2002
Cambridge, Massachusetts

by Vicki Daitch

For the John F. Kennedy Library

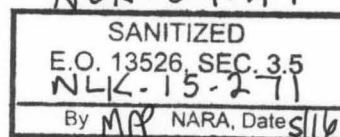
DAITCH: I'll just set up these recorders by saying that I'm Vicki Daitch, and I'm speaking with Carl Kaysen. We're in Cambridge, and today is November 21, 2002. Actually, first of all, if you don't mind, one of the things I'm always curious about is how you met Kennedy [John F. Kennedy] and became involved with him.

KAYSEN: Right. Well, I had met him when he was a senator. In fact, I had an indirect interaction with him which left a bad taste in my mouth.

DAITCH: Really!

KAYSEN: When he was a candidate for the Senate, and I'll tell you about that. But I had met him when he was a senator because he was a Harvard overseer, and I was a Harvard faculty member. I went, not regularly, but from time to time to commencement. And I can remember just shaking his hand at commencement, but I didn't know him. The political occasion was in his first senatorial campaign when Stevenson [Adlai E. Stevenson] was running for president.

I was a member of the state board of the Americans for Democratic Action, ADA, which was a liberal organization, how they would say left-wing organization. And we were told that Stevenson was losing all the traditionally Democratic--a lot of the traditionally Democratic votes in Boston because of the McCarthyite [Joseph R. McCarthy] attacks on



him. And we were trying to get Senator Kennedy, would-be Senator Kennedy, Congressman Kennedy, to say something about it. We never talked to him. We tried to talk to him.

Another fellow and I had some money to spend, and we were trying to get him to give a talk on the radio; do something. And we talked to one of his campaign assistants, I think, somebody named Pat Jackson [Gardner "Pat" Jackson], but I'm no longer sure of that. This is, you know, literally 50 years ago. Anyhow, he wouldn't talk to us, he wouldn't return our calls and neither would this guy Jackson. Later we were told by somebody that he just felt associating himself with Stevenson in any way could do him no good, the Massachusetts voters, especially the metropolitan Boston voters, just didn't like him. Who knows whether that's an accurate report.

DAITCH: Yes. Where did you hear that?

KAYSEN: Well, no. I mean possibly we heard it from.... And I think he was named Pat Jackson, but I'm not sure of that, after the election. So that was...

DAITCH: So not only would he not associate himself publicly with Stevenson particularly, he also wouldn't speak out against McCarthy publicly?

KAYSEN: No, he didn't speak out against McCarthy. So how did I come to get into the Kennedy Administration? I was a close friend of Mac Bundy's [McGeorge Bundy]. We had both held a fellowship called the Junior Fellowship in Society of Fellows at Harvard, which has the aspects of a social club as well. People meet for dinner once a week and lunch twice a week during the term time, and it's a three-year appointment. Mac and I overlapped for two years, so we got to know each other pretty well. We hit it off, we liked each other. He was a new type of person to me. I'd never met a Boston Brahmin before. I'm a Philadelphian. I started graduate school at Columbia, and then went into military service. I met a lot of Harvard people when I was in at OS. I met a lot of Harvard people, and one of them persuaded me--it wasn't hard--to come to Harvard to finish my graduate work, rather than returning to Columbia.

I had never been in Boston before I came here to Harvard. And then, after this fellowship, I joined the Harvard faculty. Mac joined the Harvard faculty, then became dean, and continued our association and got to be good friends. On February 1st, I may say that I was on leave and abroad 1959 and '60, I was in Greece for most of the year and in Europe, and I didn't get back here to the United States until the fall of '61. So I wasn't much of a participant in all the campaign. There was some Harvard mobilization. Archie Cox [Archibald Cox] ran a group of sort of academics. I remember writing a paper, too, for Archie Cox. But I really wasn't terribly involved.

On February 1st, I remember the date very well, I was in St. Louis about to give a talk in the economics department at Washington University. I'd just come from the airport. I was walking in the house, into the house of my host who was a graduate school classmate who'd moved to that department. And just as I was coming in the door, the phone rang. He had picked me up at the airport, and his wife answered the phone. And she said, "Carl, it's for you. It's the White House." And I knew it must be Mac. It was Mac, and he said, "Carl, I'm having a lot of fun. I'm overwhelmed. I need help. Do you want to come and help me?"

We had some conversation in the course of which I reminded him that although he'd stopped being dean, he shouldn't have forgotten all about it. Two days from then, or whatever it was, was the first day of the term, and I was down for two courses. The net of all that is that I went to Washington at some point to talk to him. And I agreed that I would come down at the end of the term. He took me over to the Mansion--his office was then in the Executive Office Building, he later moved to the west basement.

He took me over to the Mansion. I met the president and Mrs. Kennedy [Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy] who happened to be there. It struck me how glamorous they looked, like a couple of movie stars. And of course there is something very impressive about the Oval Office and all that. So I actually went down for spring vacation and started to work. Whenever the term was over, sometime the end of May, I moved my family down to Washington. They were not very happy about it. And that's how I came to know Washington.

DAITCH: Now, when you met the president, did you feel that it was sort of an interview situation at all? Or had he accepted Bundy's...?

KAYSEN: Well, I think it wasn't an interview situation. I think it was more Bundy recruiting me than the president interviewing me. That is, I'm sure the situation was that if Bundy said, I want so-and-so, Kennedy would have said, "Sure." And this was just at the very beginning of the administration. Now, as you may know, I don't know how much of this stuff you have read into or heard about. Bundy and Kennedy knew each other not terribly well, but they'd actually gone to the same school, a school called the Dexter School.

And curiously enough, Harvey Bundy [Harvey H. Bundy] and Joe Kennedy [Joseph P. Kennedy], Harvey Bundy was Mac's father, Harvey Bundy and Joe Kennedy had helped found the school. It was a private school in Brookline for sort of well-off parents who weren't too pleased with what was available in public schools. They didn't stay in the same school together very long. Mac--I don't know how long he was there--Mac went to Groton, and Kennedy went to Choate. But then, of course, Mac was a dean at Harvard, and JFK was an overseer for at least one term. I'm not sure whether he was an overseer for one term or two terms.

DAITCH: By the time you met the president and Bundy introduced you, had you met him again through the ADA or anything like that?

KAYSEN: No, no, I hadn't. And I would say I had, I've always been a Democrat and a liberal Democrat. I voted first time for Franklin Roosevelt [Franklin Delano Roosevelt]. I voted for Franklin Roosevelt twice. I voted for Harry Truman [Harry S. Truman]. I voted twice for Adlai.... I've never not voted for a Democrat for president. I, like lots of people, I had a very strong negative reaction to Nixon [Richard M. Nixon]. And Kennedy looked like he was going to win.

DAITCH: A positive thing!

KAYSEN: A good thing. So I was enthusiastic. I had some reservations. I knew a little about Joe Kennedy. I didn't know him. I didn't meet him 'til.... I met him a few times; he was already an ill man in a wheelchair when I met him. So I never really knew him, but I had some political reservations about him. He'd been a bit of a McCarthyite, he'd been an isolationist in the Second World War, and so on. So let's say I was not filled with unalloyed enthusiasm. Who knows what I would have felt in the summer of '60 when Kennedy was nominated. But since I was in Denmark....

DAITCH: Right. Not much to say about that. You know, since you're speaking about Kennedy as a person and his influences, obviously he was greatly influenced by his father, but he apparently was his own man in most things, how did you over the years...? This is sort of an ending question, but we'll ask it now as long as we're working it, how did you over the years come to see Kennedy as an individual and as a politician?

KAYSEN: Well, I came to have a tremendous admiration and respect for him, and a good deal of affection, too, I mean.... I should hasten to say I was not an intimate. I was a person who worked for him in the sense that, say, Mac was certainly more intimate, or somebody like Ted Sorensen [Theodore C. Sorensen], who was really very close to Kennedy. Or, in a different way, Kenny O'Donnell [Kenneth P. O'Donnell]. But I felt I knew him pretty well. I would guess, I'll come to this, but I would guess that over the two and a half years, whatever, I was there, I saw him on the average of three times a week.

DAITCH: So that's pretty regularly to be seeing the president.

KAYSEN: Yes. Not in big meetings. But, you know, for ten minutes or 15 minutes or five minutes or something. Evelyn Lincoln [Evelyn N. Lincoln] had an informal list, and it was in her head, as far as I could see, of people who could come into the office whenever the president wasn't busy if they had business. Now, I'm sure that if you came into the office without having business and abused that relation, that you'd be knocked off the list pretty soon.

DAITCH: Sure.

KAYSEN: And you knew the president had the world on his shoulders and all that. But what it meant is whenever I had something I thought the president ought to hear about or know about it, and that it could be done in a short time and needed an answer: Did he want to have a meeting on such-and-such? Somebody wanted to talk to him; did he want to talk to that person? That kind of thing. I would go--there were certain times of the day when you knew it was a good time--at the end of the day I'd go to Evelyn Lincoln's office. She would look through that peephole and say, "The president's busy." Or I'd call, and Evelyn would say, "The president can see you now." "May I come over?" And so on.

So now I also saw him in meetings. I went to NSC meetings. But I'm talking about seeing him enough to get some sense of him individually, and I think I got a pretty good sense of him. As I say, I ended up feeling admiration, respect, and considerable affection. I don't know if you've ever seen a particular picture of the president.... It's the one that was

taken when he was getting an honorary degree at Amherst. Do you know that picture?

DAITCH: I don't think so.

KAYSEN: It's in profile. I actually have a bad copy of it upstairs in my study. It was given to Mrs. Kennedy after the president's death. And it was given by all the academics who were around the White House. And inscribed to Mrs. Kennedy, "From the teachers in the White House, in memory of the best teacher of them all." And, you know, Dave Bell [David E. Bell] and Mac and Kermit Gordon and Jim Tobin [James Tobin], and I'm in there. Jerry Weisner [Jerome B. Weisner]. There were at least a dozen of us who were active.

We thought Kennedy had a very quick mind. We thought he had a kind of intellectual sparkle. He was intellectually curious. He liked to learn things. And while he was, you know, he was always busy, always over-committed, always pressed, when he got interested in something, he got interested in it whether it was immediately relevant to something he had to do or not. I'll tell you two quite different stories that strike me as examples of this.

The president was very much impressed with Willy Brandt, who was then mayor of Berlin. And I happened to be the note-taker when Brandt came to call on him once. And I saw how much he enjoyed the interaction. Sometime after that, which I think was in the fall of '62, I'm not sure, he got a note from Brandt requesting that he meet a very old man from Hamburg who was a member of the SPD, the Social Democratic Party, who had been a member of the Reichstag in 1914, of the German Imperial Parliament in 1914.

DAITCH: Oh, really!

KAYSEN: As I say, he was a very old man. And you may or may not know, you have no reason to know, that the Social Democrats, who had been anti-imperialists, did vote for the war credits for financing the war in 1914. The party was split on this, but the majority of the party voted for supporting the war. This was somewhat surprising, given their political history. And this was to be a ceremonial visit, you know, five minutes, Mr. President, I'd like you to meet..." And so on. I was again escort officer. I don't know why, but I was. The president shook his hand and said something ceremonial. This gentleman said whatever he had to say. And the president said, "I understand you were a member of the Reichstag." "Yes." "Why did you vote for the war credits?" And the man started to explain.

Now, Kennedy knew that from the sheet that the State Department had sent over, but the man started to explain. And Kenny O'Donnell opened the door and to indicate the president was behind schedule, that his next appointment was waiting at the front door. The president waved him away, and this conversation went on for maybe 15 minutes or so. Then it was over, and I escorted this gentleman out. I happened to stop in later the same day, and the president said to me, "Kenny was kind of irritated with me, but when else would I have got a chance to talk to somebody who himself participated in that?"

DAITCH: Yes. Wow!

KAYSEN: And that's the kind of thing that academics admire.

DAITCH: Absolutely. Well, he's very historically oriented, thinks about these things and cares.

KAYSEN: Yes. Now I'll give you another example, a very different sort of example; it's an amusing story in many ways. One of the things Kennedy was confronted with fairly soon after he came into office, in the summer of '61, wrestled with for some time, was the fact that the Soviets had resumed nuclear testing. You may remember that there'd been a moratorium which Eisenhower [Dwight D. Eisenhower] and Khrushchev [Nikita S. Khrushchev] agreed to. And the Soviets resumed testing, that is, the moratorium was on tests in the air, not on all tests, as I remember.

The Soviets exploded a helluva big bomb, and there was a lot of pressure from the Republicans in the Congress, from the military, from the Atomic Energy Commission, from Clint Anderson [Clinton P. Anderson], the chairman of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy and a Democratic senator from New Mexico, for us to resume testing, and the laboratory directors. And Kennedy was very deliberative about it. Let me interrupt myself to say.... Why don't I continue in this line and tell you more than just this story, if that's all right?

DAITCH: That would be wonderful. Sure.

KAYSEN: Yes. When we heard, Jerry [Jerome B. Wiesner] and I--Jerry Wiesner and I--I was talking to Jerry Wiesner in his office, you know, the Science Advisor, a friend of mine whom I'd known well before I came to Washington. Somebody called Jerry up from the agency or the Pentagon with the news that the Russians had exploded a test. Our impulse--I was viewed as something of a dove. Jerry was viewed as more of a dove and more of a softie than I am. Our impulse was to use the occasion of the, you know, the fact for the president to make an announcement saying he wasn't going to resume testing since we were strongly of the view that we didn't need to do it.

DAITCH: Sure. And to sort of take the moral high ground.

KAYSEN: Yes. Exactly. So Jerry called Ms. Lincoln, and she said, "The president's free." And we ran over there. Wiesner's office, like mine, was in EOB [Executive Office Building]. We ran over there, and Kennedy's remark excuse the expression) was, "Kicked in the nuts again!" So he was not about to take the moral high ground. He was mad. He felt, you know, Khrushchev was spitting in his eye. But it's also interesting that he didn't make a decision for several months. I must have written six memoranda on why we didn't need to test. There were several big meetings. Everybody was in there. But the president decided we had to resume testing. And I think, myself, I thought at the time and I think on reflection, still think that this was a political decision. His first reaction was the politician's reaction, and he decided he'd better follow that.

DAITCH: I was going to ask you if he.... And, of course, this is all hindsight, too.

Obviously we know that it wouldn't have made any difference in terms of how many more nuclear weapons you have.


KAYSEN: How many, or what the designs are. I'll talk a good bit about the Test Ban Treaty, so let's.... You know, I'll come back to this subject.


DAITCH: Okay.

KAYSEN: You wanted to ask something.

DAITCH: Actually it was along the same lines, as whether this was.... It doesn't seem to be a strategic decision in terms of defense. It was more a political decision.

KAYSEN: No. Let me say that the consensus of the scientific opinion.... I mean Wiesner, the people on PSAC, the President's Scientific Advisory Committee, the people who were experts on these things, agreed to by Harold Brown, who was the DDRE, the director of Defense Research and Engineering, the chief scientist at the Defense Department, and hierarchically, the third-ranking person in Defense--secretary, deputy secretary, and then DDRE. Harold agreed. He was a physicist. He'd worked at Livermore. He agreed. The lab directors, of course, didn't agree because they ran the establishment. All their people, they existed to test. That was their business, to design weapons.

Well, I'm now back to the story I started to tell you. One of the tests we ran sometime in the late spring of early summer of '62 was a test code named 


Do you know what the Van Allen belt is?

DAITCH: No.

KAYSEN: It's a belt of electrons or a set of belts of electrons trapped in the earth's magnetic field. It circulates, oh, at varying heights depending upon lots of complicated things which I don't understand well enough to explain up in the stratosphere.

And they affect a great many things: radio communications among them. And they're electrons, so they're negatively charged.

One of the questions that some of the scientists raised is: What would this explosion do to the Van Allen belts? Would it destroy them? And I remember one discussion in which Kennedy uttered a characteristic wisecrack. Wiesner was talking about that, and he said Weisner, "Jerry, have you asked Van Allen? After all, it's his belt."

DAITCH: He said, "Have you asked Van Allen...?"

KAYSEN: "After all, it's his belt."

DAITCH: "After all, it's his belt." That's cute.

KAYSEN: But the question is, would they be destroyed? And that depended in turn whether the wave front.... See, you fire off a nuclear weapon, there's a tremendous outburst of radiation all through the electromagnetic spectrum from gamma rays which have very, very short wavelengths to visible light to infrared rays. And the question is what the sign of the wave front's--there's a spherical shell of waves coming out from the explosion--what the sign would be. Would it be positive, negative, or neutral? Well, that's an experiment that nobody had ever done. So the answer was we don't know.

PSAC had a committee to study the test results and report what had happened. The head of this committee was a man called Richard Garwin. He's still around. A very, very brilliant physicist, a man who used to be at IBM, but devoted a lot of his time to defense science issues. And he and Glenn Seaborg [Glenn T. Seaborg], who was then head of the Atomic Energy Commission, came into Bundy's office to tell Bundy what the results were. I suppose they'd gone to see Wiesner and tell Wiesner. And I happened to be talking to Bundy when they came in. So we were all there. And Bundy said, "Well, let's see if the president's free. You might as well go up, if he is, and tell him yourselves."

The president was free. We all went upstairs. Mac introduced Garwin to the president. Garwin was a very good expositor, very self-confident, well-organized, just very impressive. Gave an excellent explanation of what was going on, what the people had found and in the course of the explanation he used the phrase, "an order of magnitude." Is that a phrase you know?

DAITCH: Sure.

KAYSEN: Do you know exactly what it means?

DAITCH: I don't know actually scientifically what it means, but I'm familiar with it.

KAYSEN: It means.... Well, let me tell the story, and then you'll get the answer. And Kennedy apparently hadn't heard the phrase or, anyhow, in the context. And he said, "Dr. Garwin, you said it differs by an order of magnitude. Just what does that mean?" And Garwin explained that it means a factor of 10. So to say it's different by an order of magnitude, it means it's ten times bigger or one tenth as big or....

DAITCH: So it's an exponential....

KAYSEN: Yes, that's right. And Kennedy rolled the phrase around on his tongue a couple of times, said, "Order of magnitude. Order of magnitude."

DAITCH: Great phrase.

KAYSEN: Then he turned to Glenn, and he said, "Now I know, Glenn, whenever I ask you for advice, you're always right within an order of magnitude."

DAITCH: That's great. That's Kennedy. So how did you...? I wanted to write down. Is it Garman?

KAYSEN: Garwin, G-A-R-W-I-N. Richard Garwin. Still alive and well.

DAITCH: I've been interested in the PSAC work. Actually there's a physicist who I coauthored a biography on. He was a member of PSAC.

KAYSEN: Who's that?

DAITCH: John Bardeen.

KAYSEN: Oh, yes. Sure.

DAITCH: He's a quiet guy. Not much into these things.

KAYSEN: No. I have, I think, met him once, but I didn't know him. Is he still around?

DAITCH: No, he died in '91. Nice man, he was. But in any case, I was interested in the Science Advisory.... We may not have time to talk about this today, but I'd sort of like to kick around some of the later things that happened that aren't directly related to Kennedy.

KAYSEN: Kennedy, yes. Well, let's leave them out. I'd be glad to do it sometime.

DAITCH: There's this course of events in which you come into the White House directly through Bundy, not really though Kennedy specifically.

KAYSEN: No.

DAITCH: And obviously you're a fairly close advisor to Kennedy after a while, I mean a person who's in and out. But you're an economist, right?

KAYSEN: I am an economist. But let me tell you the first thing I was asked to do and explain it a little.

DAITCH: Okay.

KAYSEN: The first thing I was asked to do by Mac, and he took me up to talk to the president about it, and I started working on it in March when I spent spring vacation in Washington, was a civil defense program. During the Second World War I was in OSS, first as a civilian. Then I went overseas to London to an OSS unit that was created to advise the Eighth Air Force on bombing targets, on the basis of economic analysis.

So I learned a lot about bombing, about military tactics. I participated in writing the

air operations plan for the invasion of Normandy. I became something of a sort of amateur military expert. And I kept up some interest in that over time. I was a consultant to Rand for a while. I did some consulting for DOD. So that I had some second career, even quasi-professional as military planner, for air power. And since I'd been in England, I'd been bombed.

DAITCH: Experienced it from both ends.

KAYSEN: And all that. So the first thing I was asked to work on was on what Kennedy should do about civil defense.

DAITCH: And you were brought in more in that capacity, or just whatever.

KAYSEN: Well, I was brought in.... I was going to say I was brought in on the proposition that Mac Bundy had the president's confidence, that Mac thought I was a smart fellow. Say, for the record, I am a smart fellow.

DAITCH: I think we know that.

KAYSEN: Or I used to be before I got old and decayed. But seriously, you know, Mac had had a lot of experience with me. I was on a fairly important faculty committee called the Committee on Educational Policy. But it also functions, if you think of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Harvard as a legislative body, which it is in certain contexts, then the Committee on Educational Policy is its Rules Committee. Any piece of legislation is discussed in that committee before it's discussed in the faculty as a whole. So in addition to the interaction I had with Bundy in the Society of Fellows.... And Jim Tobin, who was a member of the Council of Economic Advisors, and I were contemporaries in the Society. It's unusual that two of us in the same discipline were elected for the same period of time. But that was a mistake. Jim got a Nobel Prize, and he was the one who should have been elected, not me.

But Jim and I both hit it off with Bundy. We spent a lot of time talking to him about politics, about economics in this society. I would take some credit, Jim and I jointly take some credit--he's no longer among us; he died last year--take some credit for making a Democrat out of Mac; or, I should say, a New Dealer. But Bundy brought me on that basis. And the White House staff worked very much on the sort of anybody can do anything basis. And that White House NSC staff was very small. I could count them off, but there were only about half a dozen senior people in it compared with the huge machines they have there now.

DAITCH: Right. How do you feel that that worked? It seems so informal.

KAYSEN: Oh, it worked wonderfully, basically I think that Bundy observed which of his staff people sort of got in tune with Kennedy. He saw that, and he just then--I wrote an obituary notice for Mac someplace. And what I said is that Mac had only two rules about the staff, the senior people--three. He treated us as equals, his

colleagues. [RINGING PHONE] Excuse me. I'd better answer that. [BREAK] Three rules: One, we were treated as equals. Two, we should keep him informed of what we were doing. And three, we should remember that we were neither constitutional officers nor members of the Cabinet. We were simply staff aides. And, say, somebody like Mike Forrestal [Michael V. Forrestal] was another person who dealt with the president directly. Bob Komer [Robert W. Komer], a little less so, somewhat.

DAITCH: We hear so much about all of this interaction with the more informal staff rather than the Cabinet members. How do you feel that the staff interacted with the Cabinet members?

KAYSEN: Well, we were.... Now, Bundy said in some piece of paper that I've seen, it's not a public piece of paper yet, maybe it's going to get published. He said something about his relation with Dean Rusk. He said how foolish the people were who thought he wanted to be secretary of state. That he knew that the last thing the president wanted as his senior Cabinet officer was a 41-year-old Republican from Massachusetts who was a Harvard dean. And then he said, "Dean Rusk and I were very different people; but we shared one characteristic, that each of us thought the job we had was the job we should attend to."

And while Rusk found some of us irritating, found me irritating and I know he found Mac irritating a bit, we were very respectful of Cabinet officers. I mean we knew that they were Cabinet officers and we were not. We never.... I think none of us ever tried to block a request from a Cabinet officer, ignore it. I can remember discussions about the Export Control Act. Application of the Export Control Act is supervised by a committee consisting of the secretary of commerce and the secretary of defense and the secretary of state, with the statutory power to say what shouldn't be exported for national security reasons. As it was at that time. I don't know what it reads today. And the chairman of that committee was the secretary of commerce.

You may or may not be aware that the secretary of commerce in the Kennedy Administration was a nice old man called Luther Hodges [Luther H. Hodges] who'd been governor of North Carolina. He was a politician. He was a courtly Southern gentleman. Not the brightest bulb in the chandelier. He had a very smart undersecretary, named Eddie Gudeman [Edward Gudeman], who kind of ran this thing. But it was a messy business, and there was a lot of pulling and hauling of business interests involved in granting licenses, denying licenses, and so on. Kennedy asked me to write a memorandum about some issue involving export controls.

I remember I looked into it and decided it was a mess. Wrote a memorandum, a careful memorandum, saying this was not very well run and why it wasn't very well run. He looked at it, and he said, "What a can of worms! Why did I ever ask you to do this?" Now, it would never have occurred to me to say, you know, you want to do this or that? Take it away from Hodges. I wouldn't have said.... It would have not been my place to say anything. I tried to make a factual report as to what was going on and what the problems were, as I saw them. And certainly, I mean, for instance, the president and McNamara [Robert S. McNamara] had a very easy relation. The president and Rusk had a kind of tense relation.

DAITCH: Was that a personality thing?

KAYSEN: Well, yes. This will be hard to get into the tape recorder, but something we'll want to talk about at some point. I went with Harriman [W. Averell Harriman] to negotiate the Test Ban Treaty. And just before we went off to Moscow, I stopped at New York to pick up Harriman at the airport. Harriman was waiting in the VIP Lounge there, and then we would be off to London and Moscow. And while he was waiting, he called up Rusk, Harriman was a pretty good politician--although not good enough to get to be president as he wanted to be. He thought it was the right thing to do to call up Rusk. He knew that Rusk was both skeptical about the Test Ban Treaty and had been a little hostile to his (Harriman's), being appointed as the leader of the negotiation.

So, you know, he called up Rusk to say he was about to take off, and there was some conversation. Of course I didn't hear it. And then when he finished, he said to me, "What a strange man." He had called Rusk to congratulate him on his testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee on the civil rights bill. Some of the Southern senators had asked him questions about protests. [CHANGE TO SIDE B OF TAPE] About Martin Luther King. Hostile questions. Rusk was really very good: he said, you know, if I were.... Well, in that time he probably said, "If I were a Negro, I would have done the same thing." And Averell called him to congratulate him, and Rusk didn't receive this the way Averell thought he should. He received it with a sort what are you after? I mean as he explained to me.

And another time I was in Averell's office in the State Department. We got to be very close friends, partly because, we being Averell Harriman and I, because Mike Forrestal was kind of his adoptive child. For some years after Jim Forrestal [James Forrestal], Mike's father, killed himself, Mike lived with the Harrimans, and he was my colleague on the NSC staff. And because of that I got to know Harriman in a more intimate way than I would have simply by having been on the White House staff and working with him occasionally. He was sitting at his desk, and we got into a discussion, and somehow Rusk was mentioned. And Harriman stood up, and he said, "How can you ever get anything done if your posture is always like that?" To Rusk.

DAITCH: Kind of leaning over and defensive and closed?

KAYSEN: Guarding his vital parts. So, for instance, McNamara and the president were very easy with each other, and Rusk was not easy with the president.

DAITCH: Do you think Rusk had reason to be a little defensive in terms of he was the secretary of state. Maybe he felt that his influence was being a little bit superseded by other people?

KAYSEN: Well, I think it's more a personality thing. Let me tell you another Bundy story. We had been in a meeting of the Committee of Principals; that was the people who talked disarmament. The committee consisted of McNamara, Rusk, Glenn Seaborg, Bill Foster [William C. Foster], the head of the USACDA, and Bundy. And sometimes Wiesner went, and sometimes I went along. Wiesner may have been a member of the committee, but I certainly wasn't. But whatever the occasion was, I was there. I had come

over from the White House with Mac in the same car.

The meeting was in Rusk's conference room. When it broke up, the secretary indicated he wanted to talk to Mac, and I sort of made the silent interrogation of should I wait for you or go? And he said to wait. So I waited. Within five minutes, Mac gets out. We went down to the car, and I said, "What did he say?" He said, "Just the same thing he said in the meeting. I have a dream or a fantasy that Rusk will be in with the president, nobody else, and will say to him, 'Mr. President, I have a very important idea. If only there weren't so many people here, I would tell you.'"

And there was.... I know secondhand from Dick that in a long flight to South America with Dick Goodwin [Richard N. Goodwin].... When they'd had a couple of drinks, Rusk expressed his irritation with having to explain his views and argue with him with the bunch of young jerks around. I mean I don't know what word he used. He felt.... Let me give you a different example.

Doug Dillon [C. Douglas Dillon] was in a running fight for the whole of the administration with Walter Heller [Walter W. Heller], the chairman of the council, Dave Bell [David E. Bell], Jim Tobin, George Ball [George W. Ball], and me. This was a group which was fighting with Dillon about foreign economic policy, particularly monetary policy.

DAITCH: There's a Cabinet member who has a reason to be defensive. [Laughter]

KAYSEN: Yes. But Doug was totally self-confident, extremely self-confident, and still is. Doug must be 92 or 93 now.

DAITCH: Good for him.

KAYSEN: But he was a totally self-confident man, totally at ease. He was a Republican. The president appointed him because he was a Republican. I think the president had a realistic assessment of, so to speak, how much Doug shared his political views and goals. But they were very easy with each other. And that's why I say I think it's a matter of character, Rusk's own character or personality, whatever you want to call it. And when I say character, I don't want to suggest anything bad about Rusk's character. I think he was a very decent, very honorable, very straightforward man. But he was kind of inhibited and rather prim.

DAITCH: Reserved.

KAYSEN: Yes.

DAITCH: It must have been difficult for him to deal with. It's almost hard to envision all these young sort of hotshot brilliant, including the president himself....

KAYSEN: Yes.

DAITCH: I mean you were all the age that I am now, maybe late thirties, early forties mostly.

KAYSEN: We were.... Well, I was 41 when I went down there. Bundy was a year older. Ted Sorensen was 35. I would guess the median age of this crowd was about 40.

DAITCH: Yes. I suppose maybe there was a little bit of a sense that you haven't earned it. Even with the president, because I'm told that there were.... That more than one person advised him that it wasn't time for him to run for the Senate. It was definitely not time for him to run for the presidency.

KAYSEN: Sure. Sure. Oh, sure. That's right. Well, I can remember some meeting in the Cabinet Room at which Dave Bell and Ted Sorensen and somebody else, two other people.... Ralph Dungan [Ralph A. Dungan] was one, and somebody else; I can't remember who, were discussing the then AID administrator, A-I-D. That was a man called Fowler Hamilton [Fowler Hamilton], who hadn't lasted very long. We were discussing why we thought he shouldn't last. And at the end, Ted looked around at the five or six people who were there and said in this tone of voice, "And this is the government of the United States?" [incredulous tone] We were.... Ted is here this term if you knew.

DAITCH: Oh, no, I hadn't. That's great.

KAYSEN: He's at the Kennedy School. And he was at dinner. But I've derailed you from your...

DAITCH: No, this is how I get the best stories. You're not really derailing me. Actually, if we could talk about some things that are fairly serious.

KAYSEN: Oh, yes.

DAITCH: I mean that's actually not a bad question. "And this is the government of the United States?" We have all these young people, and this was an enormously dangerous period.

KAYSEN: It was.

DAITCH: And just so eventful, both domestically and in foreign policy. You were talking about disarmament and that. Maybe we should talk about that a little bit.

KAYSEN: Well, let me talk about the first thing I worked on. I'll tell you generally what I worked on. The first thing I worked on was this civil defense question, and I worked a lot on that. Then since I'd got into that and I was working with Jerry Wiesner, and I knew Jerry, and Mac had a proper appreciation of the value of personal connection. If you knew somebody, you could work with them easily and so on. He set me to looking into sort of where the idea of the missile gap came from, where did the ideas come from. And it turned out the fellow in CIA, who was a big wheel in their estimate, had been a

Ph.D. student of mine at Harvard....

DAITCH: No way!

KAYSEN: A fellow named Ed Proctor [Edward Proctor]. So, you know, I got a lot of that. And then because Jerry was very much interested in arms control and because the president was interested in arms control, I started to take that. While I did all kinds of strange and wonderful things, the major things I worked on were arms control/disarmament and related issues, nuclear testing, military budgets, strategic procurement decisions, you know.

Kennedy made the decisions that shaped our strategic forces for ten years: How many Minutemen to buy.... For more than ten years, for 15 years, until we started getting into MX. How many Minutemen to buy, how many Polaris boats to buy, were decisions Kennedy made in his first budget, the November '61, the fiscal '62 budget that was being generated in the fall of '61. I spent a lot of that fall writing memoranda about how we didn't need more than 500 Minute Men, 20 boats, not a thousand Minutemen and 36 boats.

DAITCH: Wow! I don't know what was the upshot of that. Were you successful?

KAYSEN: A thousand Minutemen and 36 boats.

DAITCH: Right. Now why was that...? And we'll get back to some more of the details of these arguments, but from my understanding of Kennedy, in many ways he was conservative. He obviously understood that we didn't necessarily need to escalate these things in order to be able to protect ourselves as a nation. And yet he did decide on some of these things.

KAYSEN: Well, my understanding of this, which I've gotten from McNamara, with whom I now remain a friend, not that we see each other often, but we do see each other from time to time. We once wrote a piece together in Foreign Affairs.

DAITCH: Oh, neat.

KAYSEN: When we talked about it in later years, McNamara said that he became convinced that the minimum Kennedy could buy politically was a thousand Minutemen.... The number fluctuated 900 and something, a thousand Minutemen and 36 Polaris. And that the pressure from the military, pressure from the hawks in Congress was such, and Kennedy having run on the missile gap, that he just couldn't get away with it. And McNamara, I mean I first met McNamara, I hadn't known him, I first met McNamara by arguing with him about these numbers. You know, years later, he told me that I was right, and he had no real defense of what he did except that he felt he was giving Kennedy the right political advice.

DAITCH: And Kennedy, he had access to your information, too, your reports and...?

KAYSEN: Oh, yes. I mean....

DAITCH: So he was making his own decision.

KAYSEN: Oh, sure. And I had Sorensen somewhat on my side. Oh, he (Kennedy) was making his own decision. But, as I say, I think, and I'm speculating, I wasn't present when McNamara and Kennedy had their discussions, but I think their discussions ran along the lines of it doesn't make an awful lot of difference whether we have 500 or a thousand. But I don't think McNamara did pay enough attention to the question, if we build a thousand, how many will the Russians build? But we do have a political problem, and here's how I see the problem.

DAITCH: Do you think that international politics played a role in terms of intimidating the Soviets or was it more domestic?

KAYSEN: No, I think it was more domestic. We by then knew the Soviets had almost no missiles. In the summer of '61, they probably didn't have five operational intercontinental missiles. Because they started out with the first round, and they were no good. They didn't work right. So they sort of went back. They had lots of intermediate-range missiles, targeted on Europe. But they had almost no missiles.... There was a missile gap, only it was a missile gap in favor of the United States by a big amount. We knew that. We suspected that as early as February. We knew it by June.

DAITCH: June of '61.

KAYSEN: That's right.

DAITCH: Wow! So tell me about.... We were talking about disarmament, we were talking about the strategic.... I don't know if we're skipping to this, but I wanted to talk about when you went to Russia with Harriman.

KAYSEN: Yes.

DAITCH: I wanted to talk about that personally as an experience for you, but also about what happened.

KAYSEN: Well, what happened.... Let me say that, to give you another broad observation, there were two things that Kennedy had in his mind and was anxious about all the time from the first time I ever saw him, or heard him talk seriously more than "how do you do," until the last time I talked to him. One deserved the anxiety, and that was nuclear weapons. And the other was gold, about which he obsessed, too, and he shouldn't have. That's a whole other story. And I got into civil defense.

When I first talked to the president, Mac took me up to talk to the president, and what the president said to me is, "I want you to see what I can do. Here's why I think it's important: I am the President. I have the responsibility for defending the United States. The

Russians have bombers and missiles. We might have a nuclear war. Anything I can do that would make us safer.... I have a responsibility to do. I don't want to do anything that's provocative. I don't want to do anything that would seem to the Russians that we're preparing for war. And I don't want to spend a ridiculous amount of money." Another Kennedy theme which came up every now and then.

DAITCH: Spending money?

KAYSEN: Yes. Walter Heller once said that when he first went into the president's office with a budget projection that showed that the federal budget would cross a hundred billion dollars, or whatever, Kennedy said, "Get out of here! I never want to see that number again." So at every time when we discussed these weapons, when we discussed testing, when we discussed.... It's clear that Kennedy felt the tremendous responsibility that being in command of nuclear weapons and facing a hostile power that was in command of nuclear weapons involved. And as I say, I think it was never out of his mind. He was always, he was always receptive to anything he thought would work in the disarmament effort. He was skeptical, but he was receptive.

DAITCH: I read.... And I'm backing away from the Russian trip again, which I want to get back to.... I didn't understand most of what I read. But you had written a report in I suppose it was '62 about SIOP '62.

KAYSEN: Yes.

DAITCH: I found that really an interesting kind of argument.

KAYSEN: There was an article in the *Atlantic* about it.

DAITCH: Oh, really?

KAYSEN: Did you ever see that?

DAITCH: No, I was actually trying to wade through the document.

KAYSEN: Well, they declassified a lot of it. Go ahead, ask me the question.

DAITCH: Well, the question was I found it all interesting, and I found it persuasive. But that's from my view of not knowing very much. But the president, he apparently saw this document. Was there any action that was....

KAYSEN: Oh, yes. He started.... He told McNamara to get the SIOP changed.

DAITCH: Oh, he did.

KAYSEN: Oh, yes. I happened to attend the briefing. Now, Walt Rostow [Walt Whitman

Rostow] was Bundy's first deputy. And Walt was appointed by Kennedy, not chosen by Bundy, chosen by Kennedy. Walt claims--and I have no reason to doubt it. Walt's somebody I've known a very long time, since the 1940s--Walt claims he invented the phrase "new frontier." But Kennedy appointed him. Have you run across him? You've interviewed him?

DAITCH: I haven't interviewed him. I just know who he is obviously.

KAYSEN: But have you met him?

DAITCH: I haven't met him, no.

KAYSEN: But when the Thanksgiving Day Massacre, when the State Department reorganized, Bowles [Chester Bowles] was kicked upstairs, and so on, Walt went over to the Policy Planning staff, and that's when I became deputy National Security Advisor. But I had already established an easy relation to the president. So I asked Bundy why I didn't get Walt's job, and he said, "Good idea. Why not?"

But the SIOP really was a terrible idea in which we were going to fire off all our forces all at once at everybody. In August, because Bundy was out of town, Walt asked me to come with him for a SIOP briefing for the president, which was held in the Mansion, not in the Cabinet Room. McNamara, Gilpatric [Roswell L. Gilpatric], Lemnitzer [Lyman L. Lemnitzer], and the briefer, who was a Navy captain or an Air Force colonel or whatever. You know, flip charts and all that. And I remember a wonderful moment in which after the briefing was finished, Kennedy said to Lemnitzer, who was Chairman of the Joint chiefs, "General"--and this was his tone--"General, why are we hitting all those targets in China? As I understand this scenario this war didn't start there." Lemnitzer said, "They're in the plan, Mr. President." And Kennedy made a gesture which I had seen several times. It was like this.

DAITCH: Tapping his teeth?

KAYSEN: Yes. Indicating extreme irritation. And then there was another question. And McNamara leaned over and said something to Kennedy. And Kennedy turned to Walt and me and said, "Thank you, Walt. Thank you, Carl," meaning, "Goodbye." And we left because McNamara wanted to scold Lemnitzer and he didn't want us in there. I mean I deduce this because it was not long after that Lemnitzer was Commander Chairman of NATO and not of the Joint Chiefs.

DAITCH: So this is not the kind of response that President Kennedy would have taken kindly to, "It's in the plan." It's not sufficient.

KAYSEN: No. Exactly. So he was quite aware of what was wrong with the SIOP. I'd written memoranda. Max Taylor [Maxwell D. Taylor] had talked to him. Max didn't like it. Jerry had talked to him. So he had heard, you know, quite a bit from his own staff about this SIOP.

DAITCH: So your alternative recommendation was a possible limited first strike?

KAYSEN: Well, no.

DAITCH: That's what I saw, and I thought maybe I'm not....

KAYSEN: My alternative recommendation was if you have to contemplate the use of nuclear weapons, you should have a plan to see what a limited first strike would look like. Not that you should do it. [Laughter] But you should have a plan. At that time we had, and I'm fuzzy on the numbers, but we had probably 25 or 30 Atlases and Titans. Most of the weight of our striking force was in bombers. It is an enormous, complicated operation to get several hundred bombers into the air, to direct them toward the Soviet air space. You know, you can't do this offhand.

If you try to do this without having a timetable for every aircraft, every crew, every move, every tanker, all you'd have is a lot of air crashes and a lot of confusion. So you can't do these things without a plan. You can't improvise a plan at the last moment. So what I was saying is we have this plan. We ought to have some alternate plans. Not, "This is what you ought to do."

DAITCH: Right, right. I wanted to be clear about that.

KAYSEN: Yes. And this was especially relevant to the Berlin Conflict. We of course, spent the whole summer of '61 obsessing about Berlin, with good reason.

DAITCH: Sure. And then there was the other, in that document, the other problem was what if we make a mistake? What if, in terms of massive retaliation, what if we only think that the Soviets have initiated a strike but they really haven't?

KAYSEN: Yes. False warning.

DAITCH: Yes, we need to be prepared for that kind of thing, too.

KAYSEN: Yes, yes.

DAITCH: These are things that military advisors didn't always see eye to eye with you?

KAYSEN: There were two sets of military advisors. There were the statutory military advisors, the Chairman, and the Chiefs. Then there was Max Taylor and the officers whom Max Taylor had on his staff. He had three officers on his staff: Julian Ewell [Colonel Julian J. Ewell], who was an Army colonel; Willie Y. Smith [Major William Y. Smith], who was an Air Force might have been a lieutenant colonel or a major. Julian ended up a one-star general.... Willie Smith ended up a three-star general, Commander of U.S. Forces Europe; Worth Bagley [Lieutenant Commander David Worth H. Bagley].... I think it's Worth Bagley.... Who was a commander in the Navy. So there was

Max Taylor, a retired general, with a staff of three who sat as members of the White House staff.

He had three military aides. Colonel Godfrey McHugh [Col. Godfrey T. McHugh], the Air Force Aid, Taz Shepard [Tazwell T. Shepard, Jr.], the Naval aide, a captain, and John Sparkman's [John J. Sparkman] son-in-law, not irrelevant, and the nuclear action officer (he was the man who carried the football around, the signals), and Ted Clifton [Chester V. "Ted" Clifton], who was the Army aide, a one--for general. Ted Clifton was very smart; more a public relations type than a fighting officer, but very smart, and, you know, shrewd about the politics of the military. So he had lots of people to talk to.

I would say that Wiesner and I were the chief civilian people who were giving him advice about military matters. Plus Harold Brown, of course, and McNamara and Gilpatric. But I meant in the White House area, it was Wiesner and I. But there were these six military men who had something to say. So he had a lot of advice

DAITCH: Did you get the feeling that he leaned more towards.... I mean this is their business. It's the business of the Pentagon.

KAYSEN: But he was a skeptic. That was one of his leading intellectual characteristics, that he always said, "Why do you think so? Explain it to me."

DAITCH: I read somewhere that he had read Barbara Tuchman's [Barbara Tuchman]....

KAYSEN: Yes. Barbara Tuchman. *The Guns of August*.

DAITCH: And that he was deeply influenced by that. I couldn't help but think how fortunate that was in that particular time that she had written that particular book, and he had read it. Because it's a very.... I mean at that moment in our history he needed to be skeptical.

KAYSEN: Yes, yes. No question.

DAITCH: And the worry about preventing any accidents.

KAYSEN: And I should add something. I don't want to sound like I'm slighting my own importance. He had access to, through Jerry, he had on PSAC lots of people with lots of experience in technical military matters, in weapons performance, and what things could do, and what was possible, and what was not possible.

DAITCH: And with no vested interest. That seems to me to be crucial.

KAYSEN: Yes. And very, very smart.

DAITCH: He took PSAC very seriously, and spent a lot of....

KAYSEN: He took PSAC seriously. I don't know how often.... This is somebody you

should interview if you haven't, if there's no oral history for Spurgeon Keeney. A name you know?

DAITCH: Yes.

KAYSEN: He worked for Jerry. You ought to interview him.

DAITCH: Okay. I think there may be an interview with him, but I'm not sure.

KAYSEN: Because I don't know how often the president met with PSAC as such. I think he did meet with panels from PSAC. PSAC did most of its work in panels; that is, you know, a committee to look at this idea and that. But I think it would be interesting to look into that.

DAITCH: My limited knowledge of presidential advising from the scientific community has been that typically the president sort of establishes these advisory panels so that they can support whatever it is that they want to do anyway, and really hadn't necessarily taken them seriously. But I think in the earlier years of PSAC that was not so much true.

KAYSEN: No. I think Eisenhower took Killian [James Killian] and Kisty [George B. Kistiakowsky] very seriously. Kennedy certainly took Wiesner very seriously. There was a breakdown with Johnson [Lyndon Baines Johnson]. Something of a personal mis-match between Don Horning [Donald Horning], who was Wiesner's successor; and LBJ.

DAITCH: And then there was Nixon [Richard M. Nixon] but that's another story.

KAYSEN: Right.

DAITCH: Okay. So do you want to get back to Russia?

KAYSEN: Sure. Well, Khrushchev made a speech in which he said something about test ban negotiations. The president was in Hawaii. He was planning to make a speech at American University at the commencement. I sent a message to the president and to Ted Sorensen.... I sent it to Ted for the president, calling attention to what Khrushchev said. And Ted, I suppose, talked to the president. And the president decided to say in the American University speech, as he did, something about it.

DAITCH: It's a wonderful speech.

KAYSEN: Yes, it is. Ted circulated it, asked for suggestions. I put my two cents' worth in as did lots of other people. But I think it is one of the two best speeches Kennedy gave.

DAITCH: Is your other favorite the standard inauguration?

KAYSEN: No.

DAITCH: No? What's your other favorite?

KAYSEN: I mean I think that's an eloquent speech but a terrible speech. The Cold War, call to arms. No, the civil rights speech which I think was Kennedy.... I watched it in I guess Ted Sorensen's office, the big office there on the second floor, with Ralph Dungan. We watched it on TV. The president never liked anybody in the room when delivered a speech. And so we watched it there. And I felt.... And if you remember that speech, at the end he just looks into the camera and says something like (I may not have the words right), "Above all, we have to do it because it's right."

DAITCH: Yes.

KAYSEN: And I thought that speech both came from his heart and was Kennedy saying to himself: This is going to be tough, I'm not sure I can get it done, I'm not sure I've got the votes for it. I really don't want to do this, but I have to; I mean, in effect. And that's why I thought it was the best speech he gave.

DAITCH: Yes. It was a very powerful speech, I think.

KAYSEN: Yes. And very moving.

DAITCH: Mmmm hmmm. Absolutely. And you're right, "because it's right" is a....

KAYSEN: Yes. It's a terrific line.

DAITCH: Yes, it is. What about the American university speech?

KAYSEN: So he was in the speech, and I thought it was a terrific speech.

DAITCH: What did you contribute to that speech?

KAYSEN: I don't know. I mean, I said: Talk about disarmament, talk about peace, talk about how we all have to live on the same earth together. Whatever.

DAITCH: But those are so, you know, that sounds like, maybe now it sounds like, oh, whatever, we just did this and that. But that was so profound at that time.

KAYSEN: Yes. That's right. And, you know, it was only not quite seven months after we all thought we were going to blow up the world. So then we got a message back from Khrushchev. Then there was a conversation about who should go to Russia. The president was in Palm Beach. I had to coordinate some messages. I remember

getting Max Taylor, who was then chairman of the Joint Chiefs. And Max said about his view that this was a political decision for the president to make, and he indicated, he didn't say, indicated he didn't think the military were going to be pleased with it. But I mean he sort of said, in effect, without saying it, he said, in effect, I'm going to support this. He was someplace giving a speech then. I had to talk to a lot of people on the telephone. Then Rusk wanted to offer the negotiating position to McCloy [John J. McCloy]. McCloy didn't want to take it because he didn't feel it was going to succeed.

DAITCH: Oh, he didn't! You know, I read somewhere that he was on vacation or....

KAYSEN: But I think that's it. And he, though, he didn't accept. Then I think I said to Sorensen.... I remember discussing this, but you'd have to ask Ted because he talked to many people besides talking to me I said, "Why don't we take Harriman?" And anyhow, we did take him.

DAITCH: So why wasn't this...? I mean Harriman, I mean, he knows about Russia. He's a scholar. Why not Harriman? Isn't that...?

KAYSEN: Well, because, you see, Rusk, even George Ball--Rusk and George Ball and a whole lot of the State Department focused on Germany. They were very anxious about what would the Germans would think. They were very fearful that any approach we made to the Soviets would be interpreted as a stab in the back by the Germans. I forget when Adenauer [Konrad Adenauer] stopped being chancellor, but it was in '63. I think he'd already stopped by this time, but only just.

Remember what the Hallstein Doctrine was? Walther Hallstein, the secretary of state in the Foreign Office, he had the idea and sold it to Adenauer, who was very happy with it, that West Germany wouldn't have diplomatic relations with any state that had diplomatic relations with East Germany. And therefore that meant we couldn't have them. We endorsed the Hallstein Doctrine. We supported it. And Kennedy thought it was a lousy idea, and Macmillan [Harold Macmillan] was strongly against it. The whole EUR, European Branch of the State Department, and the whole top management of the State Department, Rusk, Ball [George W. Ball], Merchant Livingston, Johnson [U. Alexis Johnson] maybe a little less, were very focused on being sure the Germans didn't weaken, being sure that neutralism wasn't rearing its ugly head...

DAITCH: Right. They're vested in this idea.

KAYSEN: ...and all that. And Harriman had been there, negotiating with the Communists about Laos, they just didn't like that.

DAITCH: Yes. It wasn't so much that they didn't feel that he had the skills.

KAYSEN: No. It was they felt he wasn't on their side, and they were right. [Laughter] In a certain sense they were right.

DAITCH: Yes. Well, in the sense that this was not a successful policy, it's not getting us anywhere.

KAYSEN: Yes. That's right.

DAITCH: Well, I think about President Kennedy, and I always think of, he uses the word in all these wonderful press conferences and speeches that I watched, he uses the word "vigah" (vigor), and, you know, the notion of moving forward and actually doing something different.

KAYSEN: Yes. And we had hoped to get a... I had been to India with Harriman, a long trip that was actually after the Cuban Missile Crisis, you may remember. You can't remember it, you weren't born.

DAITCH: I was born, but just barely.

KAYSEN: The Chinese invaded India during those two weeks. And Harriman went on a mission to see Nehru [Jawaharlal Nehru] and Ayub Khan [General Mohammed Ayub Khan], and I went with him. It was a lot of fun. But, so we, as I had said, we got to be friendly. He was then still married to his second wife. His first marriage was relatively brief. You know, he was a very, very handsome man. He was a dashing athlete. He was a ten-goal polo player. And he had brought skiing to the United States. He created Sun Valley.

DAITCH: Really!

KAYSEN: Yes.

DAITCH: I didn't know that.

KAYSEN: Yes.

DAITCH: That's interesting.

KAYSEN: Well, don't want to get off into reminiscences...

DAITCH: He's a great historical character.

KAYSEN: ...about Mary Harriman. She was a wonderful person. But anyhow, I did really hit it off with Averell and so on. So I was just delighted to go. I think it may have been Mac who suggested I go along. It probably was. But Kennedy thought that was a fine idea.

DAITCH: Well, you had been working on this, right? Preparing papers and....

KAYSEN: Yes. Oh, I had been working on it, I had been working on it for several years. Two things were clear from the minute we got there: It was clear that Khrushchev wanted a treaty. And it was clear that we were not going to get a treaty that ended all testing. We had with us a fellow called Frank Press, who was a geophysicist. [PHONE RINGING]

DAITCH: That's good timing. [END OF TAPE #1]

KAYSEN: A member of PSAC. He was an expert on seismology, on underground test detection, and so on. When he came to Moscow with us, he called around to Soviet geophysicists he knew. They were all out of town.

DAITCH: It so happened.

KAYSEN: It so happened. Exactly. And we literally knew from that moment that there was going to be no discussion about underground testing. That became plain. It did become plain that the Soviets wanted a treaty. They did throw their usual sort of monkey wrenches into the discussion, but they didn't push them. For instance, they talked about a nonaggression pact between the Warsaw Pact and NATO. That's a no-no for the Germans.

DAITCH: Yes.

KAYSEN: Was thought to be. And if we had said, here's Carl Kaysen speculating: McCloy might conceivably, because he was a big NATO guy, might conceivably, had he been a negotiator, said, well, we can't discuss this. Harriman said, "Well, that's a good thought. Let's finish this treaty, and then we'll see if..." Then there were some questions about, how would East and West Germany both sign it? And all those things which the Soviets raised because it was part of their standard repertoire. Harriman sort of skated around them, and the Soviets didn't push him.

DAITCH: Sure. And he's familiar with all that. He knows how to skate around them.

KAYSEN: Yes, yes. And, it's not even that he knows how to skate around them--McCloy's a smart fellow and a good negotiator. That Harriman--he wanted to skate around them is the point. And so we got a treaty.

DAITCH: So what about the treaty? I mean was it as much as you could've gotten at that time, do you think?

KAYSEN: Yes. I was clear that we couldn't have gotten a comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. So it was as much as we could have gotten at that time.

DAITCH: It was just an atmospheric?

KAYSEN: Underwater, atmosphere, and outer space. Three areas, three regions.

DAITCH: Right.

KAYSEN: And it was an easier sell because we had done a lot more underground testing than the Russians. We were better at it. They were just learning to do it. But of course they learned.

DAITCH: I'm sure they did, yes. Bringing the treaty home.

KAYSEN: Well, you know, Harriman and I flew up to Hyannis Port. I have a picture someplace of our standing on the steps in the compound up there, and getting patted on the back and so on. And then it was the end of July, I guess, when we came home. Kennedy was starting to make a few sort of preliminary tours with the next year's election in mind. And he discovered when he.... I think it was the first time out West. He was speaking.... I don't know whether it was Colorado. Was it Colorado? I think Colorado had a Democratic senator at the time. He was speaking in one of the Rocky Mountain states, I think.

DAITCH: The conservation tour maybe?

KAYSEN: Maybe. But he mentioned the Test Ban Treaty and got a positive reaction. And then he spoke more, and he got a bigger reaction. That's when he realized he'd have an easy time getting it ratified.

DAITCH: But there were people.... I mean the military, some members of Congress.

KAYSEN: Earlier, the year before, the Senate Preparedness Committee had a hearing on this. It wasn't the Preparedness Committee. Maybe it was. But it was a Senate committee. Stennis [John C. Stennis] was the chairman, you know, a "Democrat." And McCone [John S. McCone] was trying to sabotage the prospects of getting the treaty.

DAITCH: Trying to sabotage?

KAYSEN: Oh, yes.

DAITCH: How?

KAYSEN: Well, he lent some people to Stennis's staff. He himself gave testimony about detection capabilities and so on, which was, you know, being skeptical, and worrying, and so on. In fact, I remember that Abe Chayes [Abram J. Chayes], who was the counselor of the State Department, the legal officer of the State Department, a Harvard law professor, another Cambridge friend, called me. He'd heard about this on his circuit. And I called McNamara and told McNamara that this was going on, and that he

should get Harold Brown ginned up and get some other people ginned up to give some testimony so that the record wasn't just all one way.

DAITCH: Right. Wow!

KAYSEN: Which we did.

DAITCH: Yes. Those things are.... I don't know how important they are at the time because maybe the vote would have gone the same way anyway.

KAYSEN: Yes.

DAITCH: But I think from an historian's perspective, to me those things are really fascinating because you go back and you read the papers and the *Congressional Records*, and it doesn't look the same.

KAYSEN: No, no. Well, as you know, Kennedy was always on the edge as far as, especially, the Senate went because almost half the Democratic votes were Southerners who were against almost everything he was for.

DAITCH: Right. Exactly. And it's a terribly difficult row to hoe in terms of getting support for the things that he should easily be able to get support for.

KAYSEN: Yes. And he was also mindful of how many votes he got and how many votes he didn't get in the election. I'll tell you a nice Kennedy story. There was a period when, for whatever reason, I was dealing with Africa, a subject in which I had no competence, no particular competence. But neither did anybody else around there. And Sékou Touré [Ahmed Sékou Touré], who was the president of Guinea, insisted on meeting the president. And, you know, everybody wanted to meet the president, and the State Department usually tried to fend people off, as they should. But I don't know why Sékou Touré broke through the defense. But anyhow, we had... The president had a lunch for him.

And on these occasions, you know, the State Department writes a toast and sends it over. And since I was the African man at that moment, I read the state version and I said to myself Kennedy will never say that, and I rewrote it. It was a kind of awkward lunch. Touré spoke no English, and Kennedy, spoke no French. So it was all with interpreters. And Touré was a very young man. He was 30 years, something like that. And his finance minister, who was along with him, was about 25.

DAITCH: Made you guys feel like a bunch of old geezers.

KAYSEN: Yes. But I do remember the toast that Kennedy gave. "To Sékou Touré, the kind of president I would like to be, 90 percent of the vote."

DAITCH: Now that was honest.

KAYSEN: Yes, yes.

DAITCH: Did he come up with that himself, or is that the one you....

KAYSEN: No, no. I didn't. I had the briefing book, I probably looked through it, but it would never have occurred to me to say anything like that, to put such words in the president's mouth. I mean I can remember an occasion in which I wrote a telegram to Ken Galbraith [John Kenneth Galbraith], who's an old friend, Harvard colleague of mine, when he was in India. And he had written some telegram about something, a kind of a wise-guy telegram, to the president, with whom he was on very easy and good terms. I wrote back a wise-guy answer and signed Kennedy's name to it, which was something I shouldn't have done. But being it was Ken, I thought it was okay. And I got scolded for that.

DAITCH: Oh, really!

KAYSEN: Oh, yes.

DAITCH: By the president?

KAYSEN: Oh, yes.

DAITCH: Wow! Well, they're very conscious of the....

KAYSEN: But, you know, I certainly would never have done it in any situation other than one in which....

DAITCH: Right. A friend and.... What was it like to be scolded by Kennedy? I can't imagine.

KAYSEN: It was very mild.

DAITCH: Was it?

KAYSEN: I think that except with the Irish Mafia, as we called them, with Kenny, and to some extent Ralph Dungan, and Larry O'Brien, I think Kennedy never said a harsh word to anybody. I mean I was at a meeting with.... No, I was in the office, and he had a conversation with Ros Gilpatric. And it was about some procurement thing about which, I don't know really, I can't remember what it was. But Kennedy said, "Well, I don't think that's a good thing to do." That's all he said. And then afterwards to me he said, "You know, Ros really...." I didn't know what he'd done, "Ros really ought to have known better."

But he would never say that. He was always gracious and so respectful. I can give you another example of being scolded, which I remember. I don't know what he said to me about Ken. But he said to Mac.... Mac said something about Yugoslavia, and most favored nation status and some trade issue with Yugoslavia that was under discussion in the Hill.

And Kennedy said, with a certain asperity, he said, "Listen, Mac, you let me deal with the Senate. You're not really very good at that or I'm better at that than you are."

DAITCH: Yes. So that's about as strong as he would get with that kind of thing?

KAYSEN: Yes. And in any.... I mean he would say things like that phrase I quoted.... That he said to Wiesner and me. But that was not directed at us. I mean I knew LBJ very little. I knew him when he was vice president. I saw a little bit of him when, the first year, he was president. But LBJ would show real anger or contempt. I never saw Kennedy show that, you know.

Well, I can remember once again something I didn't usually do. I was not routinely involved in the press conference preparation. Mac was, but there was some occasion when Mac was out of town, so I did it. The secretary of state and Pierre [Pierre E. Salinger] and Ted and Kenny and Larry, I guess, would meet in the morning and sort of go over things that Pierre would say: the president was likely to be asked about. And then the president would say, well, what about this or that? And then various people would disperse to get answers.

So on this occasion Bundy was out of town, and I did it. And then Pierre and typically Mac would go up.... The president would take a nap before the press conference.... He would go up to his bedroom and, while he was dressing, go over whatever bits of information that came in. Pierre on this occasion brought in some harsh statement that the Mexican ambassador had made, with some unflattering personal reference to Kennedy. And Pierre said, "You're going to be asked about that." And Kennedy said, "Well, I guess I'll say, 'We gringos won't take that from you spics.'" Or something like that. He was tying his tie and whatnot. Then he was asked the question, and he said, "Well, I don't know exactly what the Mexican ambassador said. But we have very good relations with the Mexico. The Mexican ambassador is a gentleman and a diplomat." And, you know, "Next question."

DAITCH: He's fabulous.

KAYSEN: Well, I always watched the press conferences because they were just so good.

DAITCH: Oh, yes.

KAYSEN: He obviously enjoyed himself. He went into the ring, and it was very good.

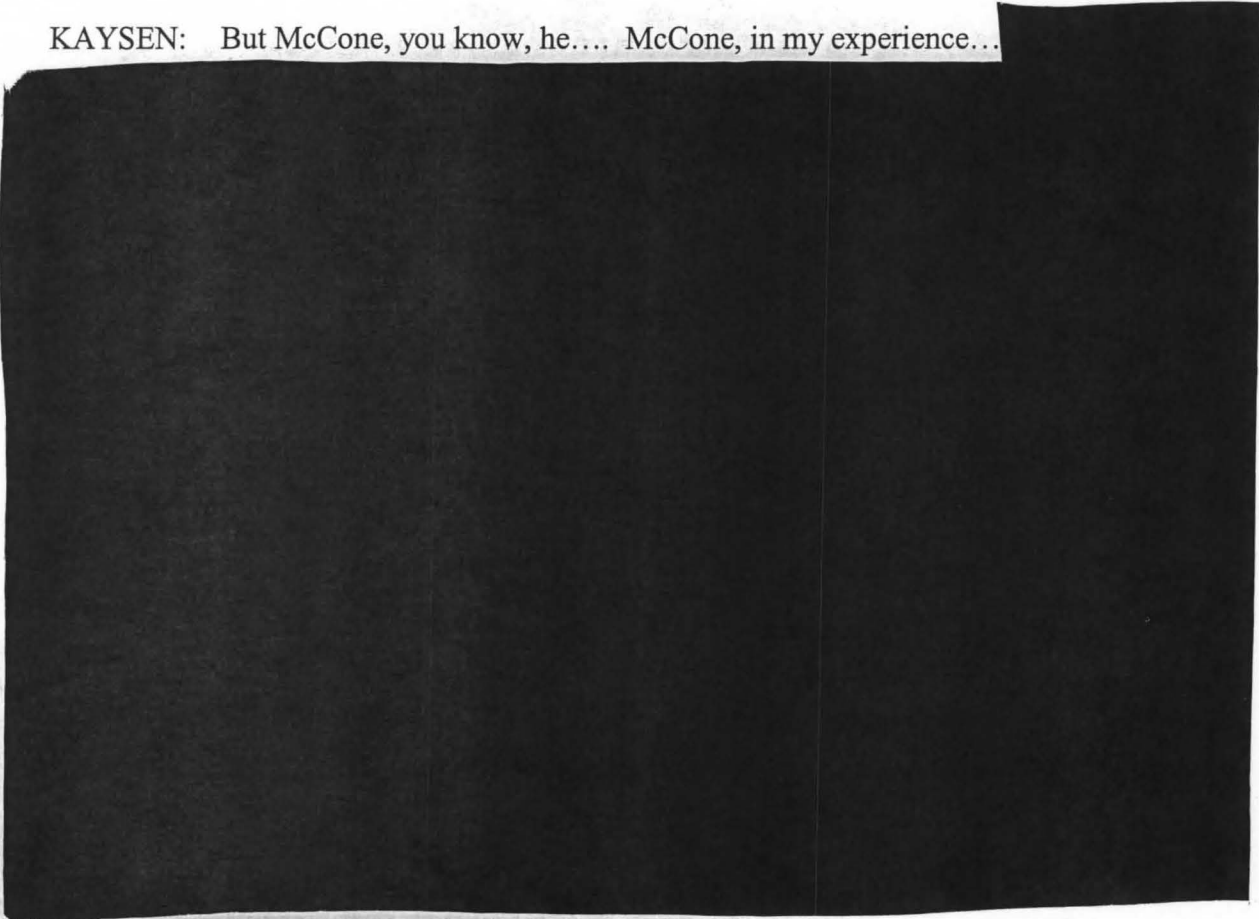
DAITCH: Oh, he was brilliant. I love watching those because he's just.... I mean even on film that is 40 years old and, you know, it's fabulous to watch. It is so interesting. But I was going to ask you about something that Maura [Maura Fitzgerald Porter] had told me, that.... I'm thinking about some of the things you've told me about McCone and how possibly he wouldn't have been the president's most intimate advisor, given some of his stances on certain things. But, you know, Maura told me that she's been reviewing some of the tapes, and she said that he's very cordial with McCone. I guess he was very cordial with just about everybody.

KAYSEN: He was very cordial with everybody. You know, he knew what he was getting

when he appointed McCone. He appointed him because he wanted protection from his right flank. He said to Wiesner--Wiesner told me this, I didn't hear it--he said to Wiesner, "I'm going to appoint McCone as head of the CIA. I know you won't think it's a good idea. You've got 24 hours to find a reason why I shouldn't do it."

DAITCH: Right.


KAYSEN: But McCone, you know, he.... McCone, in my experience...



DAITCH: That makes you proud to be an American.

KAYSEN: But, you know, Kennedy was not going to have it.

DAITCH: 

KAYSEN: Yes. I mean the idea that you.... And I had no idea.... 

DAITCH: An example of the CIA run amuck. I mean you wonder how many of these stories are accurate. But this kind of thing leads you to believe that....

KAYSEN: Yes. But, you know, Bobby [Robert F. Kennedy] was obsessive about Cuba.

DAITCH: He was?

KAYSEN: Bobby was. The president wasn't obsessive about anything, but I think Bobby was obsessive about Cuba. I think he.... And there was in Bobby a certain unconstrained element. I didn't know him that well.

DAITCH: He was a very passionate person, wasn't he?

KAYSEN: Yes, yes.

DAITCH: I was actually going to ask you that very question about the president. He has such incredible self-control. But I've always had the feeling that there was a passion underneath him that drives.... I mean he couldn't do the things that he did without that.

KAYSEN: No, I'm sure that's true. But, you know, I simply, as I said when we began, I was never an intimate, and I saw the public person. Not the totally public person, but still a public person.

DAITCH: Maybe in the same way, though, that, you know, that you see your colleagues on campus or something.

KAYSEN: Yes, but....

DAITCH: You don't see them every day. But you know them enough to know whether they're....

KAYSEN: Yes, yes. Oh, there's certainly.... I mean certainly you wouldn't say that Kennedy was a cold man. No.

DAITCH: Before we leave the subject of the Test Ban, is there anything else that you wanted to talk about about that? Something I should have asked and didn't?

KAYSEN: No, no. I think we covered that reasonably well.

DAITCH: Was the UN involved in that?

KAYSEN: No.

DAITCH: Not at all?

KAYSEN: No. You know, the British were involved. Macmillan was very eager. Macmillan was much more of a dove than Kennedy. Kennedy liked Macmillan, they had an easy relation. But they both knew that about each other, so to

speak.

DAITCH: But how did you work in...? When you were in Russia, how did you work with the British emissary?

KAYSEN: Well, the head of the British delegation.... Lord Harlech [David Ormsby Gore] was a very bright man but kind of a silly man.

DAITCH: Silly?

KAYSEN: Yes. Yes. Averell and I had lunch with this man and somebody else from the British delegation and Macmillan. It was unusual in that Downing Street was getting some renovations. So we were in the Admiralty Quarters over Queen Anne's Gate. I don't know if you know the Horse Guards? Can you call that part of London up to your mind?

DAITCH: I don't, no.

KAYSEN: Okay. Anyhow, it was a nice elegant room and Macmillan was being charming. This was the only time I met him, but he was known for his charm, and he certainly was being charming. Harriman knew him well, as Harriman knew everybody. And I was a quiet, small boy. But at the end of the thing, Macmillan turned to Harlshan said, "And your instruction is just do what Averell says."

DAITCH: He probably didn't like that.

KAYSEN: He didn't.

DAITCH: I'm guessing.

KAYSEN: He didn't. And he was a little bit fussy and so on. But we got on. And there was the No. 2 man, and Trevelyan [Sir Humphrey Trevelyan], who was the British ambassador in Moscow; they were perfectly sensible people.

DAITCH: So it worked out reasonably well.

KAYSEN: Yes, yes.

DAITCH: Just out of curiosity, what was it like to meet Khrushchev? What was Khrushchev like?

KAYSEN: It was fantastic. It was absolutely fantastic. He reminded me a little bit of Lyndon Johnson. Lyndon Johnson on a high. He greeted us when we first came, and talked a lot, grinned a lot. Then I went with Averell to a session with Khrushchev at the end of the negotiations, a very unpleasant session, in which Averell

had a message to deliver to Khrushchev from Kennedy about Vietnam. And Khrushchev sort of rebuffed the message. There was a certain comic element in all this because Khrushchev's interpreter, Sukhodriev, had a high-pitched voice. His father had been a diplomat in Britain, and he'd gone to a kind of grade B English public school. So you had a not-quite top drawer English accent in a high-pitched voice, which was so incongruous for Khrushchev.

But what Khrushchev was saying to Averell is, "You tell your president that I don't run a post office. I don't deliver his mail. If he wants to give a message to Ho Chi Minh..." And so on. I mean it was just a total non-starter. Then there was a dinner in the Kremlin for the heads of the delegations, the two heads of the delegations and the two ambassadors. And Gromyko [Andrei A. Gromyko], of course, the foreign minister, was at the meeting with Harriman and Khrushchev. And after the meeting, we went to the men's room. I was standing next to Harriman, and he was standing next to Gromyko, and Harriman said to Gromyko, pointing to me, he said, "Can I bring him along to the dinner?" Gromyko said, "Of course." So I went to the dinner.

DAITCH: Oh, neat!

KAYSEN: Which was fantastic! Just fantastic! It was in a place called the Empress Catherine's Hall in the Kremlin, and it had malachite walls, green marble. I mean it was gorgeous. And there was a lot of drinking going on. We had quite a big dinner. But on the way to the dinner, Harriman walked with Khrushchev and this fellow, the interpreter, between them. And I walked behind with Gromyko and our interpreter, who didn't say a word. Our interpreter, Alex [Aleksandr Akalovsky], was floating back and forth and bringing me bits of the conversation. We went out of the inner part of the Kremlin, which is private, but then the outer part Khrushchev had opened as a park.

And as we were walking across this park--there were plenty of soldiers all around, but not in view--and as we were walking, Khrushchev was saying, "Here's Gospodin Garriman." Gospodin is his friend Garriman" [Harriman], not "comrade", but "Friend Garriman." [Khrushchev was pronouncing Harriman with a "G"] We have just concluded a Test Ban Treaty, and I'm going to give him a dinner. Don't you think he deserves a dinner?" And all that kind of stuff, you know.

Then Alex later said that he told--Alex didn't translate this contemporaneously for reasons you'll see--that Khrushchev said to Harriman, it used to be that when he walked across this space, he was preceded and followed by a guard. And he said to them, "I got tired of that. So I turned to the one that followed me, and I said, 'Comrade Guard, why don't you just walk beside me? I've just eaten dinner. I might fart, and it would embarrass both of us.'" That's what made me think of Lyndon. [Laughter]

And around the dinner we all sat at tables for about six or eight. And, you know, I sat with a couple of--a deputy foreign ministers and so on. And Khrushchev got up, and he walked around, and came to everybody's table, drank, toasted. And he was just like on a high.

DAITCH: He was a very dramatic, sort of theatrical person.

KAYSEN: He was very dramatic and theatrical. And he looked like a peasant. He was big, he was kind of fat and earthy. But full of vigor and so on.

DAITCH: You know, after having read about that first encounter at Vienna, the president and Khrushchev sort of came to an agreement in terms of their personal interactions?

KAYSEN: You know, I can't say anything. You ought to.... Have you looked at any of the correspondence. You know there's a lot of correspondence.

DAITCH: Yes. There's tons of it, and I've seen bits and pieces, but I've not....

KAYSEN: It's very interesting. I read quite a bit of it as it was going on. Not all of it, but quite a bit. And it was very interesting. Ted would draft the answers, you know, after talking to Mac and talking to the president, talking to Mac, talking to Rusk. But Kennedy would correct the drafts. One of my proudest possessions is Kennedy's answer to the letter I wrote resigning. Technically, my leave from Harvard was up July 1st, and I intended and did go back in October when the term started, October '63. But I remained in the White House as a consultant until the term started. I technically resigned in order to fulfill my obligations as a Harvard professor. I had to stop being a full-time White House employee on July 1st, which is when the fiscal year of Harvard begins.

DAITCH: Oh, I see. Right.

KAYSEN: So I'd written a letter of resignation, and Kennedy answered it. He dictated an answer, and then he corrected the answer, corrected his dictation. And I got from Evelyn Lincoln the copy with the handwritten corrections on it.

DAITCH: So what did he say?

KAYSEN: Well, I'll show it to you.

DAITCH: Oh, good.

KAYSEN: I know I gave a copy to Ted [Edward M. Kennedy], so I'm sure it's at the Library, too.

[END OF INTERVIEW #1]

Oral History Interview

with

CARL KAYSEN

November 29, 2002
Cambridge, Massachusetts

by Vicki Daitch

For the John F. Kennedy Library

DAITCH: I want to set these tapes up. I'm just continuing from where we left off the last time. Only it's a few days later. This is November 29th. This is still Vicki, and we're still talking with Professor Kaysen. It's just a new day, same place.

But, as I was saying, I was listening to this interview with Richard Reeves. One of the things that came up was.... I think it was Todd Mundt, the interviewer, asked him about in his book it sounded as if Patricia Nixon [Thelma Catherine "Pat" Ryan Nixon] wasn't very much present. I actually noticed that in his book about Kennedy as well, and I think he was quite explicit about it in that book. In fact, it struck me that he was rather critical that Mrs. Kennedy, Jacqueline Kennedy [Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy] was not very much present in her husband's administration. And I wonder if you agreed with that.

KAYSEN: Well, the first thing I should say is I'm a very poor source. I met Mrs. Kennedy a couple of times. I guess my late wife and I went to a couple of White House dinners. I got to know her, actually, a little bit after the president's death. There was an advisory committee on the library, sort of where it should be, what it should do, and so on. And I served on that for some period of time. So I got to know her a little better. But I had just two experiences which suggested to me that it wasn't so. But since they are two in several years, I don't know what weight to attach to them.

I don't remember, I don't think, last week that we did talk about the Chinese invasion of India which occurred during the missile crisis. At that time I was "vice president in charge of the rest of the world." I mean Bundy had said to me, "You deal with everything you can deal with, and don't come to me unless you feel it's absolutely necessary, and don't go to the president unless you feel it's absolutely critical." And so I handled whatever there was.

Then one day I get a call from B.K. Nehru, who was the Indian ambassador to the U.S. And he said, "I have to see the president." And I got a call about... It was late, and I was working away on I forget what. He said, "I have to see the president." It was certainly past six. I said, "It's just not possible." He said, "I have a very, very urgent message to deliver." I said, "Well, if you deliver it to me, I'll see that the president gets it and reads it and responds to it."

So the message came, and I looked at it, and it was a long, long letter from Nehru to Kennedy, telling him the Chinese had attacked. And it was a weird letter. He wanted to borrow some B-52's to bomb the Chinese. I got it about seven or eight o'clock, about sometime an hour later. And then I read it. I don't know whether I called anybody then. I don't think so. And I called the usher, the person who in the residence you call if you feel the president has to be seen. I was told to come up at nine o'clock.

I went. There was then a kind of little seating area at the end of the second floor corridor of the Mansion, with a little love seat and a couple of chairs and so on. And it had a window behind it that looked over West Executive Avenue. The president was seated there with Jacqueline. She was drinking a glass of wine. He was drinking a glass of milk. Jacqueline offered.... I came up with the letter saying, "Mr. President, here's a rather strange letter from Prime Minister Nehru." Jackie offered me a glass of wine, which I declined. I hadn't had anything to eat, and I didn't think I needed a glass of wine. Kennedy sat there reading the letter, passing each page to Jacqueline.

DAITCH: Really!

KAYSEN: And Jacqueline read it. She said at the end of reading it, "He always.... I don't know whether "he always appeared to be", or "I always thought of him, as a very peaceable man." The president then called David Ormsby-Gore, which, you know, was an odd thing to do, but they were close personally, and relations by marriage. He was then the British ambassador to Washington, later became Lord Harlech, and was killed relatively young in an auto accident. And he was a connection, I don't know quite what connection, of Hartington [William Cavendish, Marquess of Hartington]. Kathleen [Kathleen Kennedy Cavendish, Marchioness of Hartington] was the one who was married to the Marquess of Hartington who got killed during the war.

DAITCH: Right.

KAYSEN: Yes. So he called David, and they had an interesting conversation. I mean I, of course, heard only one side of it. And then he said to me, "Well, be sure that the secretary of state sees this." And Rusk called later. I stayed up more or less half the night talking to people and so on. Rusk called later and insisted that he

had to see the president about.... Well, it was almost midnight. And I said, you know, the president has read the letter. He said, "No...." Well, he came over, of course, and had a conversation with the president in the big sitting room that's just over the Oval Office. And the president had been wakened for this session. So that was one episode, incident, that indicated that it was customary for Kennedy to talk to Mrs. Kennedy about things like that.

Then once at a meeting much later, I mean after Kennedy's death, at a meeting of this group, and I can't remember who was there. I think Ted Sorensen was there, but I'm far from sure. Richard Neustadt [Richard E. Neustadt] was part of the group. There were others, but.... There was some discussion about somebody's opinion of something, and one person present, not me, said something about Kennedy's trusting.... I think the person in question, not the person who made the remark, but the person in question, was Kennedy's trusting Sorensen for whatever was the issue.

And I simply don't remember this with much clarity. What I do remember is what Mrs. Kennedy said, which was rather sharply said: "What makes you think he trusted anybody completely?" Which was a very interesting remark and also, to me, showed that she was engaged.

So I would be surprised if she were not involved. And I have the impression, and again it's very superficial; I really didn't know her, that she was a clever woman. Pat Nixon was somebody I saw on the television every once in a while. So I have no reason to have an opinion of her. But nothing I've ever heard or read about her suggested that she was clever, mentally quick, or whatever.

DAITCH: And to the contrary of her. Actually, I think maybe it was Professor Galbraith who told me most recently, although I've already known this about Mrs. Kennedy.... And certainly she developed into a very strong woman in her own right. But at that time she was very young, too, to be the first lady.

KAYSEN: Yes. But I mean Ken Galbraith must have had.... He toured her around India for, I don't know, she was there for about a week or ten days, wasn't she?

DAITCH: Yes.

KAYSEN: I mean he must have seen quite a bit of her. And he knew her. I mean he was one of the few people who was at once taken seriously by Kennedy [CHANGE TO SIDE B OF TAPE #2] as an officer of the government and also was in Kennedy's social circle. I mean a lot of Kennedy's social circle; people he was on easy terms with like, you know, Joe Alsop [Joseph W. Alsop] or Charlie Bartlett [Charles L. Bartlett] were not in the government.

And even his closest staff people and people he was closest to, aside from Bobby, of course, my observations were Ted and Kenny O'Donnell and maybe Larry O'Brien, although I had less observation of his interactions with Larry because that was the political side in Congress with which I had little contact. But, you know, if Kennedy gave a private party, the Sorensens were there, the O'Donnells weren't likely to be invited. And Mac maybe was more likely. So, for what it's worth, it's a question you might put to Galbraith if you have a chance.

DAITCH: I had been interested in this question about Mrs. Kennedy for a while, both because of Reeves's book and the things that I had seen to the contrary. And one thing was the, oh, was it some kind of a little plaque or something that he gave the ExCom after the Cuban Missile Crisis?

KAYSEN: Yes. A calendar. It's a silver little mahogany plaque with a silver October 1962 calendar on it with those days sort of cross-hatched.

DAITCH: Right. And I was interested in the fact that he had given her one. I don't know. I didn't get the feeling that it was just a memento, that it was genuinely that she....

KAYSEN: Well, I hadn't remembered that. But that's certainly my sense for what it's worth.

DAITCH: And it is worth something or I wouldn't have asked. [Laughter] Actually, speaking of the Cuban Missile Crisis, can I... I know that it's been done to death and people have worked it over. But just what was your...? What was it like to be there at that time?

KAYSEN: Well, first of all, I was not involved. I told you my job. But I did talk to Mac almost every day. I'm sure I talked to him every day. I certainly didn't stand around gossiping, and he was under great pressure, and I understood that. But I pretty much knew what was happening day by day. I was scared. A lot of people were. The rest of the world. There isn't a lot more to say.

DAITCH: I can't imagine how frightening it must have been. But at the same time, you have to go on about your business.

KAYSEN: Yes, well, and there was plenty, you know.... It's a very intense atmosphere.

DAITCH: Okay. So one of the things that I said, let's move into the stuff that I said we were going to talk about.

KAYSEN: Yes.

DAITCH: Which will probably be somewhat over my head in terms of economics. But let's talk about.... My understanding was, in terms of foreign policy, that Kennedy wanted to use economic policy as a foreign policy tool. Can you talk about that a little bit?

KAYSEN: Well, he'd talked about it in his campaign. He created the Agency for International Development as a new agency. He included in it something that had been created under Eisenhower called the Development Loan Fund, which was kind of a United States version of the World Bank. But he said he was going to

increase the amount of aid for development as opposed to so-called security assistance, that is, building up the military power of allies and friendly countries. The Alliance for Progress was a big piece of that, and that included a substantial aid program for Latin America. Frank Coffin [Frank M. Coffin], who later became a federal judge, was the head of the Development Loan Fund, and he was kept on. So there was an emphasis on economic aid.

Then Kennedy was eager to have trade negotiations to lower tariffs. And he got a trade bill into Congress. One of the provisions of the Kennedy Trade Bill.... Well, there were two important things. He got so-called fast-track negotiating authority. That is, you'd make a trade agreement, and then Congress would either approve it or not approve it, but couldn't amend it because...

DAITCH: Oh, okay. That could go on forever.

KAYSEN: Right. And the other thing was the provision, which was a novelty; it was a new idea at the time, of so-called adjustment assistance. And the idea was that labor that was displaced because of foreign competition that had increased as a result of the lowering of tariffs, and businesses which were injured, would get various kinds of federal help: retraining assistance, guarantees and loans for new investment, things like that.

KAYSEN: Trade negotiations business is intensely political. You know, American agriculture is highly protected, highly subsidized. Negotiations about what we do and don't do about our agricultural policy are mixed up with trade negotiations and so on. So that was an important strand in Kennedy's policy. He had appointed, again in a characteristic way, he had appointed Christian Herter [Christian A. Herter], the former Massachusetts Republican governor, as his first trade negotiator. I remember that a man called Bill Gossett [William Gossett], who had been the general counsel of Ford Motor Company, was Herter's first deputy. And again, it was a characteristic, politically-guided choice to get somebody from the business world.

So those were two important strands in Kennedy's foreign economic policy. And while the political side of the trade business, and it's very political, was dealt with in part by Mike Feldman [Myer Feldman] and in part, of course, by Larry and Larry's staff of the Congressional liaison people; the economic side was dealt with by George Ball, who was first undersecretary of state for economic affairs. Then when Bowles [Chester Bowles] was made ambassador-at-large, he became undersecretary of state. There was an assistant secretary of state for economic affairs, Ed Martin [Edwin Martin], as well as the trade negotiator. So there were a lot of people involved.

The security assistance part of AID, things given for purchasing military equipment or for training soldiers and the armies of other countries and so on, were handled by a joint group from the State Department and the Pentagon. So there was a lot of interagency action involved. And while the Council of Economic Advisors dealt with these things, I did, too. I was the only member of the NSC staff who was a professional economist. So I got involved in this. And I don't know that we touched on that the last time.

But all the members of the council, well, two of the three members of the council were old friends of mine. Walter Heller I hadn't known before, but we became friends. And

quite a few of the council staff were people I knew well; Bob Solo [Robert M. Solo], for example. So I got involved in all those things.

DAITCH: And it sounds like there were these sort of three strands of foreign economic policy in that you have the security military aspect, and then the development AID.

KAYSEN: And the trade.

DAITCH: And the trade.

KAYSEN: But there was a fourth strand which is equally important and probably occupied just as much time, and that was monetary policy. We had a deficit in our foreign accounts. We spent more money abroad than we earned abroad. We were on the gold standard internationally. That is, a foreign central bank with claims against the United States can ask for gold. We were, in fact, losing gold, and this was a big issue. It worried Kennedy more than it should have, in my judgment and that of my professional colleagues. But the two subjects which, so to speak, Kennedy always had in his mind, and you could almost, sort of, always get a discussion out of him if they came up and were nuclear weapons and gold.

DAITCH: Really?

KAYSEN: Yes. And the gold represented a big internal debate within the administration. A group consisting of the Council of Economic Advisors, especially.... Well, there are only three members of the council. But the so to speak intellectually more important person in the group from this point of view was Jim Tobin. Walter Heller was chairman, was very good. But Jim was the most intellectually powerful person on the council. The council, George Ball and I.... You give me some weight, not equal weight.... All said, in effect, this isn't as important as you think, and there's a simple cure for it. And I'll come to that in a minute.

The secretary of the treasury, Doug Dillon, and Robert Roosa [Robert V. Roosa], the under secretary of treasurer for international policy, international monetary policy, who was really doing what Douglas Dillon wanted him to do, a very able, smart man, another academic, pushed very hard on defending gold and worrying the president about the loss of gold. The reason for their stance, in my judgment, a judgment shared by all the rest of this group, or, let's say, in the shared judgment of this group, was it was they were politically against Kennedy's expansionist economic policies. And they said, "You can't afford to do this because it'll lead to a further drain on foreign exchange." Which is correct. It would have.

These policies, to the extent they were successful in expanding and getting us a faster recovery from the stagnation we were in, would have increased the demand for foreign goods as American incomes went up. It would have raised the prices of American goods as wages went up, and so worsened our foreign balance. What the economists said, this crowd, plus George Ball, who was one of them, not an economist but a smart lawyer, what we said is the

basic problem is the dollar's overvalued.

That is, the gold price of the dollar, how many marks or francs or pounds the dollar commanded; and it was marks and francs that were important, not pounds, since they were the countries with which we had big deficits, partly on NATO account because we had soldiers and airplanes and bought fuel and all that. The economists calculated that the dollar was overvalued about 10 percent. And that all we had to do to solve our problem was do what, in fact, Nixon did do some years later, go off gold.

Now, the president has the power, acting alone, that is without Congressional legislation, to go off gold by simply saying that we won't sell you any. Jargon term for it is "closing the gold window" at the Federal Reserve Bank in New York. We just won't sell you any. The president doesn't have the power to fix the dollar value of gold. That requires Congressional action. And as Kermit Gordon used to say, there's a very simple cure for the deficit: If we just move one division out of Europe, all the loose money in Europe would be deposited in New York the next day. I don't know if you understand the point that's being made.

DAITCH: Explain it. I'm assuming this has to do with just the number of American....

KAYSEN: Well, it has to do with our military expenditures, a big item. It has to do with, as I say, what, in technical terms, an overvalued dollar, so that in terms of the sort of real costs of making them calculate it in the appropriate way.

A Ford cost a little too much in Europe, and a Volkswagen was a little too cheap in the United States. And a lot of money is just holding assets in foreign countries. Rich people and big corporations and big banks can hold assets in various countries. And they make a decision then in terms of what the return on the assets is, what the risk is, and so on.

The point of Kermit Gordon's wisecrack was that if we just took one division from Europe, both Europeans and Americans who held assets in marks and francs and, especially marks and francs, would just convert them to dollars and bring them back to New York Fed, the depository for these. So that in a sense we were trying to say to the president, the problem isn't as serious as you think.

I think the president both understood our argument and understood, so to speak, that it was a correct analysis. But he concluded.... And whether that's a correct conclusion or not, who can say.... He made the political conclusion that a devaluation, or cutting loose from the dollar, would be a big political disaster for him. And it certainly would have been opposed by the Wall Street community and the banking community and so on. And that's the message that Dillon was giving him.

Sometime in the course of one of the many discussions of this subject, I remember Sorensen.... I went in with Sorensen, having complained to Sorensen about, something that Dillon and Rosa had done that they had said they wouldn't do. And Ted said, "Come in and repeat this to the president." We went in. And the president then said, after I had my say, "I know, I know. You and Walter and all the rest of you think I ought to fire Doug Dillon. I'm not going to fire Doug Dillon."

DAITCH: Did he say why? Did he go any further with that?

KAYSEN: No. It was perfectly plain to us.

DAITCH: So what was the...?

KAYSEN: Oh, it was a paper that Roosa had written that was distributed to all the other countries, the finance ministers or whoever, of all the other countries in the world who came to the annual IMF-World Bank meeting. I think it was the one in fall of '62. I must have been because.... I think it was the fall of '62. It could have been the fall of '63, but I don't think so. I think it was the fall of '62.

We had had a lot of discussion with the president, and the president had had some discussion with Dillon. Dillon saw to it that the president's discussions with Dillon were mostly between him and the president, and Dillon was a very good operator and a very clever man. So that he, on the whole, stayed out of the situation in which he would be in discussion with Heller and Ball and so on.

DAITCH: And be required to defend his position.

KAYSEN: Yes, yes. And Kennedy asked Dillon to report on what the attitude of the European finance ministers and central bankers was toward our requests for their not to trade dollar claims in for gold and so on. And the French were especially difficult on this point. De Gaulle [Charles A. de Gaulle] made several pointed statements about how the French and other holders of dollar claims were financing American policies with which they didn't agree. Kennedy was quite annoyed by this. But he depended on Douglas Dillon for reporting to him on the temper of the European banks. It was interesting. Dillon conducted all his affairs on the telephone, not on cables. No one except Douglas and his telephone operator knew what the hell he said to....

DAITCH: Really!

KAYSEN: At State everything was done in a cable, and there was a record, and you saw what was said, and people fussed over, you know each word. But Douglas.... Well, there was a lot of back and forth about this. Kennedy wrote a letter around to the secretaries of various cabinet departments urging them to be economical about overseas expenditures. And he created a reporting system, and I was made secretary of that, and I had to get a report each month from each cabinet officer.

And when Kennedy told me he was going to do this, and so on, I tried to say, to the extent that any staff member can say to the president, "Mr. President, that's a terrible idea. You don't want to do that. I don't want to do it. I don't want.... " But he just, "Shut up and do what I say." He never said those words, of course.

DAITCH: Right.

KAYSEN: He didn't talk that way. But that was the message.

DAITCH: I'm the president. You'll do what I tell you.

KAYSEN: Well, he just said, "No, I really want this, and I expect you to do it." And I said, "Yes, sir." Well, that went on for more than a year. In fact, I'll tell you a little story not with respect to Kennedy but with respect to Bob McNamara [Robert McNamara] and Jim Tobin. One of my wisecracks, which I have repeated too many times--I suppose McNamara by now has heard it--it is that Bob's kind of inner slogan is "Anything worth doing is worth overdoing." Well, have you ever met him?

DAITCH: No, I haven't.

KAYSEN: He is a very intense and very determined man. He's an admirable man. I have a great respect and affection for him, admiration. But he does have this super intensity. And when this presidential notice was sent around to every cabinet department, about being careful about overseas expenditures, Bob started to do things that were crazy. Like sending vehicles back from Germany to the United States for repairs and maintenance.

DAITCH: Oh, my gosh!

KAYSEN: And Jim Tobin said to him once, "You know, Bob, the root of the problem is that we think the dollar is overvalued by, say, 8 to 10 percent. What you're doing corresponds to devaluing your dollar expenditures by 90 percent. That doesn't make sense." And Bob, who was a very smart man, immediately saw the point. But Kennedy had made his judgment, and he stuck to his judgment that he just didn't want to do this. I mean there was a lot of machinery.

There was something called the Long-Range International Payments Committee. I think Bob Roosa was the chairman of it, and, Jim Tobin and Walter Heller and Ed Martin and.... No, I guess Walter wasn't.... Jim was on it, Ed Martin from the State Department, a couple of other people from Treasury, and somebody from the Federal Reserve Board, and I. We met once a month, and we talked about things like that. Bob Rosa and Doug Dillon were very clever. They invented various gadgets, financial gadgets, to find more ways to persuade Europeans to hold gold. So this was a big underlying tangle that persisted all through the Kennedy Administration.

DAITCH: Even though Kennedy probably saw that it really wasn't so desperate?

KAYSEN: I remember joining Walter Heller and Jim Tobin and talking to Kennedy, and explaining to him the technicalities of how he could go off gold without Congressional authorization. And it was very funny. He kind of wrote some notes, and then tore off the sheet of notepaper from the pad on his desk, put it in his desk drawer as if to remind himself, you know: I can do this.

I can remember an occasion in which we had a half-day meeting. And for the president to devote a half a day to something that was not going to be an action item was very unusual. Had a half-day meeting. I think it was actually after Jim had gone back to New Haven, but I can't be sure of that. Douglas Dillon, Bob Roosa and George Ball, the whole

crowd, were there. And Jim Tobin was the kind of lead expositor on how the international payment system worked.... It was a seminar, and the president doesn't usually have seminars.

DAITCH: Right.

KAYSEN: The other seminar--I can remember a similar one, but it was more of an action item--as a seminar on nuclear testing and test detection, in which Harold Brown was the kind of lecturer in the seminar.

DAITCH: It suggests two things: One is that the president was a man who just enjoyed learning about these things and interested.

KAYSEN: No question about it.

DAITCH: The second thing is that he also valued his time. I mean here's a man who does like to make decisions, needs to make decisions. I wonder if it suggests a little bit that he really was kicking around the idea of doing something about monetary policy.

KAYSEN: Oh, he may have been. And, you know, I never heard him say this, and I never heard Walter or Jim say what I'm about to say, that is, never heard them report that Kennedy had said to them what I certainly never heard him say, you know, about some things he would say, "Well, that's something I'll do in the second term." He said that several times to Arthur Schlesinger [Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.] about recognizing China. That is in Arthur's book. To my knowledge, he never said to any of the likely people he would have said it to about going off gold as something I'll do in the second term. It's possible that he said it. Now, the Test Ban, of course, was something that did really occupy him, and that he went ahead to do.

DAITCH: Now what did he think...? And again, this is probably a fairly simple question, but it gives us an overview of what was.... It's a fairly simple really complex question. What did he...? In the big scheme of things, what did he want to gain by this looser policy of expanded trade and that sort of thing?

KAYSEN: Well, he felt that the way to win the contests with the Soviets in the Third World was to help the poor countries to develop, to prosper. That was, I think, the kind of deeper sense. I don't know how to sort that out from a kind of more narrowly or more, how shall I say, abstract ethical concern. The degree of inequality was wrong. He certainly did feel, in respect to the United States, that poverty was a problem that the government had a responsibility to do something about.

How much he felt this independently of the Cold War context with respect to the international scene, would be hard to say. You know, my image of Kennedy is that 1960 when he was running, and 1961, January 20th, when he made his inaugural address or when he made the speech about going to the moon, he was a total Cold Warrior. By '63 he had

stopped being a total Cold Warrior, and he had come to the view that was expressed in the American University speech: We all live on the same planet, and we have to get along to keep on living. And so on.

So, as I say, it's hard to disentangle this. But certainly it was a strong theme in Kennedy's thinking about these questions. It was a big part of our foreign policy to help countries develop.

DAITCH: Do you think that part of the reason that he was so concerned about gold was just sort of.... I mean when you're in the middle of the Cold War, America has to look strong. If there's anything that makes America look weak in terms of a weak dollar, is that part of it?

KAYSEN: Possibly that, yes. This was part of what we were trying to teach him not to think. But it may well have been part of it.

DAITCH: And you can't help but.... I mean it's difficult from my perspective. I grew up as the Cold War was.... It was still on, but waning. And so it's a little bit difficult to really.... You have to study it and really think about it to get a feel for how much it colored everything at that time.

KAYSEN: Yes.

DAITCH: The trade policy and that sort of thing, did that emerge out of Eisenhower's policies, or was this completely different, this expansion?

KAYSEN: No. It wasn't completely different. Promoting free trade and trying to lower tariffs and so on had been the policy of every American administration starting with Franklin Roosevelt. But I think Kennedy put a lot more effort into it than Eisenhower did. I think it was a bigger part of Kennedy's concern than it was Eisenhower's concern.

DAITCH: I'm trying to think about the other people who might have been.... You've told me a little bit about the Council of Economic Advisors versus some of the other people. But what other individuals or agencies or what was Congress's role in this type of thing?

KAYSEN: Well, you know, Congress had a very big role. Getting Fast-Track through was important. Adjustment Assistance was important. All these things, and all are highly political. There are two people who lived through these experiences who are still around. Both of them live in Princeton, New Jersey. One is Mike Blumenthal [W. Michael Blumenthal], who was Carter's Treasury secretary. And the other is William Roth [William M. Roth]. William Roth became first the deputy trade negotiator and then the trade negotiator.

I am reminded of another funny Kennedy story. Ralph Dungan was the person on the White House staff dealing with senior foreign policy appointments, dealing with the political

side of senior foreign policy appointments. I mean who would be an ambassador and so on. And, you know, in the funny way that the Kennedy White House was organized, Ralph had three totally disparate jobs. He was the liaison with the trade unions. He was the liaison with the Catholic Church. He was "hoyant et pratiquant", a good Catholic. And he had this foreign policy assignment, especially foreign policy personnel assignment, especially in regard to Latin America, but more broadly.

Bill Gossett, the Ford Motor Company guy I mentioned earlier, didn't like his job. He'd never been in Washington before; it involved a lot of going up on The Hill and testifying and being badgered by Congress. He didn't enjoy that, and he wasn't too well. The long and short of it is that he resigned. And I remember going into the president and reporting this to him, that Bill Gossett... And I'd talked to these people. I'd talked to Gossett and so on. Mike Blumenthal at that time.... Mike Blumenthal, as you may know, was born in Germany. He escaped from Nazi Germany via Shanghai.

DAITCH: Oh, really! I didn't know that.

KAYSEN: He had an interesting history. But anyhow, he was fluent in French, fluent in German, and pretty good in French. So he was the guy who worked in Geneva on these matters. He was in the Office of the Trade Representative, a special trade office. I don't remember whether that was created in the Kennedy Administration. I think it was, but I'm not sure of that. If it was, again that would be a Congressional matter of getting that and so on. But I'm not sure.

So I reported to Kennedy that Gossett wanted to resign. He said to me, "Are you sure you didn't push him?" Because I had indicated in several discussions of some of these matters that we'd had that I didn't think he was such a great asset. And I pleaded innocent. He said, "Well, go find somebody else."

So I went to look for Dungan who did this. Dungan was on vacation. And I called him up and said, "The president said go find somebody else. How do I do that?" He told me how to get his secretary to give him a list of possible people that he kept. And I interviewed several of them. Then I called him again and said, "A fellow named William Roth looks very good to me." "Roth, remind me who he is." We talked about him. "Oh, he's from California. Call up Jesse Unruh [Jesse M. Unruh] and see if Jesse Unruh has anything against him."

DAITCH: Hmmm, the senator.

KAYSEN: Jesse Unruh was the most important Democratic politician in California at the time. He was the leader of the Democrats in the state assembly. So I had to clear that with Unruh, and Unruh had nothing against him. So I then came in with the CV, and he'd had a business career. He'd been born on his maternal side into a very rich family. His middle name was Matson. I don't know if you've heard of the Matson Lines. They were cruise lines and merchant lines that ran from the West Coast to Hawaii. The troop ship I went over to Europe on in 1943 was a converted Matson liner.

So I went to Kennedy with this CV. He said, "I see he went to Yale. Did you ask Sarge Shriver [R. Sargent Shriver, Jr.] about him?" And I said, "No, sir. I'm afraid it didn't occur to me." He looked at me like kind of, you dope. And then he said, "What were his

grades?" And I said, "I didn't think to ask." He said, "What kind of a professor are you?" [Laughter] And then he said, "He looks good. Bring him around, and I'll talk to him."

Anyhow, he was appointed. Then when Herter got really quite sick, resigned, I mean he resigned because he was sick, Bill became the trade negotiator and remained the trade negotiator through some substantial part of the.... No, I guess through some part of the Johnson Administration. But anyhow, both he and Blumenthal are alive and well. I haven't talked to Blumenthal in quite a while, but I've talked to Bill, oh, within the last year or two. So you might look and see if they have been interviewed. And if they haven't, they should be interviewed.

DAITCH: Sure. Absolutely. I may not understand anything they're saying either about trade, but....

KAYSEN: Well, no, I think.... While Mike is an economist with a Ph.D. from the University of California, Bill's a businessman, very smart and interesting.

DAITCH: I think it's that trade seems to me to be really important aspect of what Kennedy was doing.

KAYSEN: Yes, I think it is. I think it is. I'm just trying to think who else. Well, there's a man called John Leddy, [John M. Leddy] L-E-D-D-Y, who at the beginning of the Kennedy Administration he was in the Treasury. And then he went over to the State Department. He would be a person you could talk with.

DAITCH: And what was his....

KAYSEN: Well, he was an assistant secretary of the Treasury concerned with international financial affairs. Then he was assistant secretary of state for European Affairs for a while. Now I'm not sure of the timing of this, when he went to State, whether it was in the Kennedy Administration or Johnson Administration.

DAITCH: Tell me about the.... Maura actually was telling me that when she's been going through some of your papers. There seems to be a fair amount on OECD.

KAYSEN: Oh, yes.

DAITCH: What was going on there?

KAYSEN: Well, OECD grew out of OEEC.... [END OF TAPE #2] This stands for Office of European Economic Cooperation. And it was created at the time of the Marshall Plan for the Europeans to coordinate their planning about receiving Marshall aid. It sort of hung on after the Marshall Plan. Then it was decided, I think early in the Kennedy Administration, in the context of Kennedy's interest in development, to change it from OEEC to OECD, the Office of Economic Cooperation and

Development, and to get Japan to join.

The invitation to get Japan to join was sometime in the summer of '61. I remember going over to Japan with George Ball. I'd finished my worrying about civil defense, and I didn't have anything much on my plate. And George asked me whether I wanted to go. I'd never been to Japan, and I said, sure. So I went. My main activity was keeping George awake while he was sitting at the conference table. And, remembering all the salacious limericks I know, writing them down and passing them to George so he would read them and not fall asleep.

DAITCH: Perk up?

KAYSEN: Well, you know, it's very dull these meetings in which everything was translated into French and into Japanese.

DAITCH: It took forever.

KAYSEN: Yes.

DAITCH: Oh, dear.

KAYSEN: But then.... And this is something that I've reviewed recently, and I was very much interested in trying to find out the history of it, but I never completely found out. There was something then that was created in the fall of '62 called DAC, the Development Advisory Center. Let me step back. This is the fruit of research, and it's why there's a set of papers in my files put together on this, because I was down in the library borrowing these papers a few months ago.

DAITCH: Oh, really!

KAYSEN: In a speech that Kennedy made in Ottawa early in his presidency, he talked about the idea of having a study group within OECD which would study methods of improving the development performance of underdeveloped countries. And I've tried to find out who suggested it. That speech was made before I went to the government. I didn't do it. Walt Rostow was the likeliest person. But I wrote to Walt, and Walt said he didn't do it.

So we're a little puzzled. But anyhow, Kennedy having made this speech, when I got down to Washington, I started to follow up. It may be that Dave Bell, who was then the budget director and later became the AID administrator, did it. Dave Bell, no longer among us, had worked in what became the Harvard Institute for International Development at a later date. It wasn't called that; it was just called the Mason Project. It was headed by Edward Mason, a Harvard professor of economics. He was my mentor and patron. This Mason group did consulting for governments of developing countries, trying to tell them how to plan better to use the money and to do various things. And Dave, for instance, headed a mission to Pakistan for a while. There was another mission to Indonesia. There was one to Greece. So Dave is a likely source of this idea.

In any event, a man called Ken Hansen [Kenneth Hansen], who was an assistant director of the Bureau of the Budget, and I pushed this idea. I won't tell you all the ins and outs. They're not that interesting. There was some resistance on the part of the IMF and the World Bank to creating this in OECD. They felt it was their job, and they wanted to do it. We thought that since they were the donors of money, the governments ought to get some advice that was independent of the people who gave the money, and ought to have some help, so to speak, in bargaining with the donors.

In any event, we succeeded, and I went, the only time I was a formal representative of the government of the United States, to an OECD meeting in Paris in the fall of '62, in October sometime, when the Development Advisory Center, I guess it's called, was created. It still exists, and they celebrated their 40th anniversary. I wrote a little paper for it, but to my disappointment I wasn't asked to come over for the party.

DAITCH: You should have been front and center. You were there at the beginning!

KAYSEN: Well, I'm sure if I'd turned up, they would have welcomed me. But I wanted to be invited, so they'd pay for my trip.

DAITCH: Right, right. Has to be a formal invitation, I see.

KAYSEN: But anyhow, that was the origin of OECD, and it was used both for analysis and research, and it gathered a lot of statistical material. It was the instrument for instance, for creating a uniform system of national accounts, you know, measuring GNP and so on, in many countries, thus making policy better informed on a solid quantitative basis. They also had this advisory function and a training function and so on. It still exists, and they were also useful as a kind of cheering group and a pressure group on their member governments to raise more money for aid.

DAITCH: How did that work at the time in terms of doing this research. And how did the people in the OECD get paid?

KAYSEN: Well, there was a budget for OECD, and each country contributed, you know, a share. It was an inter-government organization. There was a treaty that prescribed all this.

DAITCH: Oh! Was that difficult to get? I mean, again, you've got this new organization. You've got, you know, probably....

KAYSEN: Well, you see, it wasn't a totally new organization because it built on an organization that had existed and the governments were accustomed to. And then it did something else, and that was very important, and probably it did this kind of thing before it got into the development business. It was used as an instrument for sort of comparing different countries, European countries, the developed countries. You know, fiscal policy and trade policy and monetary policy in each country affected every other country. And OECD would organize sessions in which Walter Heller and Jim Tobin and

Kermit Gordon and whoever would go over once or twice a year, and they'd discuss, and they'd discuss economic policies with the Germans, the French, and the Italians and so on.

It was a very important way for at least all the countries involved in this international network trying at least to understand what the other countries were doing and why. And it was done at a more technical level than would have been done if it had been left up to ambassadors trying to talk to the foreign offices or even to the treasury by us, having a more professional and continuing group.

They had staff, a very good staff. I remember the first director general who was a Dane, Thorkeld Christiansen, who was really excellent. One of the first American staff people, a man named Raymond Goldsmith, who'd been a professor of economics at Yale, he had done a tremendous amount of work on measurement and uniform systems of measurement and coordinating statistics and so on. All of which was very important for this.

DAITCH: Now, what was the reason for bringing Japan on board?

KAYSEN: Well, because it was a rich country by this time. We wanted them to start giving development aid, and they were pleased to be included in the group of leading developed nations. They put on a terrific show, though I was disappointed that all the meals that were served in a European manner. I didn't get any Japanese meals. We stayed in a swell hotel. I can't remember the name--and they had some French cooks, and we got no sushi.

DAITCH: It sounds fun.

KAYSEN: But the Japanese were, you know, very pleased to be treated as a grownup Western country, so to speak. I forget.... What's the year of the Japanese peace treaty, '57, '56? Something in there. I mean it was still a relatively recent experience for Japan.

DAITCH: But, as you say, they're developing quickly.

KAYSEN: They were developing quickly. They were having a big trade surplus. And we wanted to stimulate them to join in supporting development.

DAITCH: This stuff has always interested me in terms of how we describe developing and developed and all of that stuff.

KAYSEN: They seemed to be, how shall I say, more diplomatic than poor and rich.

DAITCH: Exactly. And underdeveloped and what I think of as overdeveloped. This OECD was strictly the "overdeveloped?"

KAYSEN: Well, it was the industrial countries, and it had a very wide membership. I mean it started out being the Marshall Plan, but then it included Australia and New Zealand and Sweden.... So it really is, I'd have to look at the list,

but it is the developed countries.

DAITCH: It does strike me, and had struck me.... I like to hear you saying....

KAYSEN: The non-Communist developed countries, though.

DAITCH: Right. Obviously. It struck me that all this grew out of the Marshall Plan, and I was actually going to ask you that before you made that clear already.

KAYSEN: Yes, yes.

DAITCH: But it sounds like an application of a Marshall Plan-type of approach to....

KAYSEN: Yes, to some degree it was.

DAITCH: For developing nations. Well, let me ask you about the East-West trade, and then I want to ask you about a quote which you've alluded to already. The East-West trade, now that doesn't just mean Japan. Again, this comes from Maura because she....

KAYSEN: No, East-West trade was meant trade with Communist countries.

DAITCH: That's what I thought. So what was the...? I mean this is something that Kennedy is trying to encourage?

KAYSEN: Kennedy was trying to encourage it. On the other hand, there was the export control regime. And there was the longshoremen's union that threatened to go on strike and not load ships when we sold grain to the Soviet Union. I remember having to explain to the Polish ambassador.... It wasn't the ambassador, it was the DM, the number two man. His name was Mation Dobrilzielski. I explained to him that the president of the United States could not tell the mayor of Akron and the Akron City Council what to do. And occasion of this lesson in American government was that we were trying to encourage trade with Poland. Poland had owed us a lot of money. We had given them some grain. They had some debts to us, and we were trying to encourage trade so they could pay the debts.

The Akron City Council.... You know, Akron, that part of the world, has got a very heavy Eastern European background in the sense that from the 1890s to the First World War lots of Poles, Hungarians, Czechs came to the United States as immigrants and went to work in the factories in Ohio and Indiana and Illinois. And the Akron City Council passed an ordinance that said any store that sold goods imported from a Communist country had to put a sign in the window saying, "We sell Communist goods." And I had to explain to the Polish minister counselor that Kennedy couldn't do anything about this. [Laughter]

DAITCH: Yes. It must have been interesting dealing with other nations who really don't, especially at that time, didn't understand that.

KAYSEN: Yes. And there were a lot of things they didn't understand.

DAITCH: Well, and things that we didn't understand about them either, to be fair.

KAYSEN: Yes. Well, right.

DAITCH: The quote that I was going to ask you about: I saw this in another interview somewhere around preparing for this. But you had said that Kennedy was a "skinflint."

KAYSEN: Yes.

DAITCH: Do you want to expand on that?

KAYSEN: Well, I'll tell you two stories. He was conscious about spending money. One story is secondhand, that Walter Heller, who would every year make a projection of the federal budget for a couple of years out, tells the story that the first time he went in with a projection that showed the federal budget would exceed a hundred billion dollars X years out, Kennedy said, "Get out of here, and take that figure away. I never want to see it again. I never want to hear it again."

But the other story is much funnier. There was a woman, Kay Halle [Katherine Murphy], from Cleveland. Her family owned a big department store in Cleveland. She was a terrific Winston Churchill fan. She'd been agitating to get Winston Churchill made an honorary American citizen. She succeeded, and the Congress passed the legislation, Kennedy was happy to sign it. And then there was some kind of a reception. Somebody referred to as "Baby Winston," who was Winston's grandchild, a man 40 years old and a member of Parliament, but he was still referred to as "Baby Winston," was going to come to a White House reception and be presented with the documents conferring honorary citizenship.

And I heard Kennedy discussing this with Tish Baldrige [Letitia Baldrige], the social secretary, about the reception and so on. She said something about champagne. He said, "Okay. But after the first round, serve New York State champagne. They won't be able to tell the difference by then."

DAITCH: Round one is fine. Round two they won't know. That's funny. That's a funny thing, I think. In a way I'm not surprised. He's the president of the United States. He should be conservative.

KAYSEN: I remember once I had to try to collect a bill from LBJ, which I didn't succeed in doing. Gagarin [Yuri Gagarin] was the first guy to go into space. Yes. Gagarin came to the United States, because there was some

International Astronautical Association, an International Scientific Association, that had a meeting, and the Soviets cleverly appointed him as a delegate, and we'd had to invite him as host of the meeting.

So there he was. And Kennedy, as he said, didn't want to have another front-page

photograph of his shaking hands with a Communist. Apparently there was a photograph, and I hadn't remembered this but I was told it, of his shaking hands with Tito [Josip Tito] when Tito was in the United States. Maybe he was a senator then. Maybe it wasn't when he was president. And it was on the front page, and he didn't feel that net was a political plus.

So he said, "I don't want to have another picture of my shaking hands with a Communist. But," he said to the vice president, "you're the chairman of the Space Council. Why don't you hold a reception for Gagarin?" And then he told Taz Shepard, the naval aide, as Taz told me, "To sneak Gagarin in with no publicity," because he really would like to meet him. He's a brave man and Kennedy admired his bravery.

But LBJ held the reception and wanted to charge the reception, the cost of the reception in the Benjamin Franklin Room at the State Department, charge the cost of the reception to the White House account. The president told me to tell the vice president that it should be charged to his account. And I tried to get hold of the vice president, who just wasn't interested in talking to me and didn't. So I never succeeded in collecting the bill.

DAITCH: Oh, well. I think I sympathize with the vice president on that one. It wasn't his idea to begin with.

KAYSEN: No. And I'm told, and this is secondhand, I didn't go to the reception, I'm told that he was late for the reception, and that it was Mrs. Johnson [Claudia Alta "Lady Bird" Taylor Johnson] who stood in the receiving line for the first half hour or something.

DAITCH: Is that right? Mrs. Johnson was pretty.... She was a good political wife.

KAYSEN: I met her only a couple of times. I went to a big reception for newly-elected Democratic senators when they lived in a place called Les Ormes, the Elms, and I met Mrs. Johnson. And I met her one other time. But my next-door neighbor, Francis Bator [Francis Bator], who worked in a similar job to mine for the Johnson Administration, got to know her quite well. He was an admirer of hers. She was apparently very impressive.

DAITCH: I thought that she was as well. Speaking of the space program, as we were, again, I'm struck by how many ways Kennedy tried to move closer to the Soviets. I mean Cold War era or not, he's making these connections in terms of joint space exploration projects.

KAYSEN: Yes. Well, I mean he did have both impulses.

DAITCH: What was the thing about...? I don't know.... Obviously it's gotten off the ground now, but even back then he was trying to do something about an orbital project or even a moon?

KAYSEN: I just don't know.

DAITCH: I'm going to see if I have any notes about it.

KAYSEN: I didn't really get into the space business at all. I mean Wiesner, of course, was in it a lot. I'm trying to think when Bob Seamans [Robert Seamans] went to NASA....

DAITCH: Is he a possible person to talk to?

KAYSEN: He is. But I'm not sure when he went down there. His name is Robert Seamans. He's a retired professor of engineering at MIT.

DAITCH: I'm actually sure I've heard the name before.

KAYSEN: Well, he was later secretary of the Air Force.

DAITCH: He might be someone to talk to. Because I just find it interesting that on the one hand Kennedy is putting the space program in terms of a space "race."

KAYSEN: Yes.

DAITCH: In terms of making it an adversarial thing with the Soviet Union. But at the same time, there's this approach toward doing something in common.

KAYSEN: Another person to talk to is a man named Spurgeon Keeney [Spurgeon Keeney].

DAITCH: Mmmm hmmm. You actually suggested him last week.

KAYSEN: Yes. He lives in Washington. He worked for Wiesner. He was a senior staff member.

DAITCH: I should try him. Actually, I think we probably have done maybe an interview with him. But it might not be a bad idea to review it and see if there are other things to ask him. What do you think about, I mean now after a period of many years, how would you analyze Kennedy's record in terms of what we were talking about earlier, the economic development and that sort of thing?

KAYSEN: Well, I think that he started many good things. I think he did push the arms race up a notch in a way that in retrospect was not necessary, and the Soviet response was to push it up another notch. We responded to that, and that's regrettable. But I think that his record of three years was pretty impressive. I feel reasonably confident that--how can you say this, it's such speculation--that if he had lived, he would have been reelected. And that he would've done a lot of things in the second term, some of which Johnson did, some of which Johnson didn't do. It's my speculation that he would've not got into a big war in Vietnam.

DAITCH: Why do you say that? I mean actually I was going to ask you about that because you were on the Security Council, and you...

KAYSEN: Well, I was on the NSC staff.

DAITCH: Staff! [Laughter]

KAYSEN: Very different from the Security Council, which I remind people, consists of the president, the vice president, the secretary of state, the secretary of defense, the secretary of the treasury, and the director of the Central Intelligence Agency. That's it.

DAITCH: Right. But you were close.

KAYSEN: I was close. And Mike Forrestal, who was the member of the Bundy staff who worked on Vietnam. He stayed into the Johnson Administration and continued to work on Vietnam. He had an office next door to mine. We got to be very friendly. I think I mentioned to you last time that it was through him that I became friendly on a more personal basis, more friendly than I might otherwise have, with Averell Harriman. We gossiped about this and that, including Vietnam. But I think he would not have done it.

One of the things that Kennedy did that people forget... Not everybody remembers is a better way to put it. You remember that very early on in the Kennedy Administration, and I think it was in August or September '61, Taylor and Rostow led a mission to Vietnam with some other people. I was just talking to a man named George Rathjens who was on that mission. He's a scientist who was working for the Defense Department at the time. But Taylor-Rostow's report, the Taylor-Rostow Report, recommended putting American troops into Vietnam, combat engineers.

At that time there was some flooding, and the report said we could put in engineer troops, to begin with, with the story that they were there to help do flood control work. But we would put them in to start building bases and as the advance party of further troops if we decided that we needed them. And Kennedy took various recommendations from the Taylor-Rostow Report but said, "No troops." And several times during the period he was president, he said about Vietnam, "Basically it's their war, and they've got to win it." He increased the advisors by a lot, and he replaced the head of the mission. In fact, the head of the mission was replaced.... No, the second time he was replaced it was already in the Johnson Administration. But anyhow, it's just my speculation that Kennedy would not have done what Johnson did.

DAITCH: There are at least a handful of people, I think, who seem to have been giving him reports not under the table, but.... I spoke to a couple of people, Galbraith was one, who was, you know, once in a while commenting from India maybe on that situation. And also Roger Wilkins [Roger Wilkins], who was with AID, and he'd been over there in that role.

KAYSEN: I didn't know that.

DAITCH: Yes. And he's a nice kid, and he's 30 or something. But he became interested in it. He was over there.

KAYSEN: Well, George Rathjens, who's a close friend of mine, we share an office. Retired professors aren't given offices for themselves, at least in our program.

DAITCH: Yes, I know. It's not fair, is it? [Laughter]

KAYSEN: But George and I share an office at MIT, and we were just talking about Taylor-Rostow the other day. And he said that his impression of 41 years ago was.... He said he saw nothing there that indicated that the Saigon government really had any capacity, that they wanted to fight. I remember writing a memorandum to Bundy after I read the Taylor-Rostow Report, which drew on some things that I'd learned the year before in Greece, saying that one of the reasons that the Greeks defeated Communists is that there were a lot of Greeks who wanted to defeat them.

But another reason is that we took over, and we had a senior person in every government office, we had an American general sitting next to the commander-in-chief of the Greek forces, and right down to American lieutenant colonels sitting next to Greek regimental or battalion commanders. What I said in the memo I wrote to Bundy was, "If we were serious about winning Vietnam, maybe this is what we had to do, because we weren't going to succeed otherwise."

Now, you know, that's neither here nor there. It doesn't say what Kennedy would have done. But anyhow, my guess is he wouldn't have gotten us into it. One particular difference between Kennedy and Johnson, well, there are two things to say: I think Johnson was in his, so to speak, in his guts just was more hawkish than Kennedy was. But the other thing is that I think a Kennedy who had been reelected in 1964, who had the success of the Cuban Missile Crisis, might have felt that he was politically more able to say, "We helped them as much as we could. They didn't use the help effectively."

DAITCH: Right. He probably would have been a little bit more able to stand up against the accusation, "You lost Vietnam."

KAYSEN: Yes. We lost. Right.

DAITCH: That's a good point.

KAYSEN: Yes. But I never was in the Vietnam business. I mean I chatted with Mike and occasionally with Mac Bundy. But I can never remember a single occasion in which I heard the president talk about Vietnam or I talked to him about Vietnam. I had no business talking about Vietnam, and I didn't go to the meetings at which Vietnam was the subject.

DAITCH: I take it you were more like foreign aid and....

KAYSEN: Well, the things I focused on were, as I say, arms control and disarmament, big-ticket items in the military budget, these economic issues. And then various things that just came up. I mean I ran an Okinawa task force, went to Okinawa to free them from the American Army, so to speak.

DAITCH: You know, that's actually one of the things that I have on my list of things to ask you. Because Maura said, "What the heck is that about?" She's looking in the papers, and she said, "Ask him what it was about?"

KAYSEN: I can tell you what it was about. At this same meeting that I went to with George Ball, which was in Tokyo, George decided to stop in Okinawa on his way home. And he said to the president, as this was told to me by Bundy, "You were running a military dictatorship." You know, "Mr. President, did you know we're running a military dictatorship in Okinawa?" And Bobby said to the president on some other occasion, "When I went to Tokyo, the Japanese talked to me more about Okinawa than about any other subject except nuclear weapons and Hiroshima." And so Bundy said to me, "How would you like to go over to Okinawa and sort of see what's going on there and write a report about it?" So I said, "Why not?"

I got myself a team of people. I wrote a memorandum from the president, to the secretary of defense and the secretary of state, and said, "I'm appointing a task force on Okinawa, and I've asked Carl Kaysen of the White House to be the chairman of it. I want you to...." And so I went to Okinawa for a couple of weeks. Wrote a report saying we were running a military dictatorship.

Well, I made a joke which I then didn't know the president well enough to feel that I could tell it to him. I said I sort of had a joke report, which was to come into the office and say, "Mr. President, the American high commissioner," who's commander-in-chief of the military forces--he was a general named Carraway [Carraway],-- "the American high commissioner military commander thinks it's un-American of the Okinawans to want to be Japanese, and it is. The high commissioner thinks he's surrounded by funny little yellow men, and he is."

The average full-grown Okinawan male was about five feet. My interpreter was a man named King Swain, [Kingdon Swain], a State Department officer. I'm six feet, was six feet then when I stood up straight, when I was younger. He was about six feet four. So we really were giants. And a lot of the people, including Carraway were all Far Eastern hands who just, felt Japan was the enemy. Carraway was personally signing forms that permitted Japanese to visit Okinawa or Okinawans to visit Japan. The Japanese offered to provide the textbooks for Okinawan schools. Carraway wouldn't accept them, you know. So he spent considerable money having American textbooks translated into Japanese. I mean there was example after example.

DAITCH: Oh, my gosh!

KAYSEN: Of this sort of mind-set of people, you know, still thinking of the Japanese as the enemy and fighting the war. And the Okinawans thought of themselves as part of Japan. They had been part of Japan. They have a complicated history which I won't bore you with. But they had been part of Japan for quite a while, and they thought of themselves as part of Japan, and "reversion," going back to Japanese government, was the big political issue. One of the features of my stay in Okinawa, besides its being the only time in my life when I had a private helicopter, was I was the subject of a Kaysen Go-Home Parade.

DAITCH: Of the what parade?

KAYSEN: "Kaysen Go Home!"

DAITCH: Oh, my gosh!

KAYSEN: You know, the Okinawan.... The trade unions were pretty left, and they organized a parade against me.... I was there to try to see what we could do to improve their lot, but never mind.

DAITCH: Why did they think not?

KAYSEN: I don't know why they think anything. Because I think they were somewhat communist-influenced, and any occasion to protest against the Americans.

DAITCH: Any American. That is so funny.

KAYSEN: So I stood up in the sixth floor of the government building, military headquarters, in downtown.... Naha! It was a rainy day, and here were all these poor folks getting rained on and carrying banners and King Swain told me what they said.

DAITCH: Wow! I wonder if they didn't know or understand what your mission was.

KAYSEN: Well, they certainly had no idea what my mission was, and, you know, it wasn't broadcast.

DAITCH: Yes. So you were just another American.

KAYSEN: I'm just another visiting American.

DAITCH: Which is just another example that you could carry back to the president about the situation there. It's hard to believe. I had no idea that that was still....

KAYSEN: Yes. We did in fact start.... We got a civilian deputy high commissioner, and we replaced Carraway after a while. He was, as he liked to say, one of his jokes

which he told everybody--it's a good joke--he's the only person of any significance in American history that's the son of two senators.

DAITCH: Son of two senators?

KAYSEN: Yeah, his father was the senator from Arkansas who died in office. And the governor appointed his widow to fill out the unexpired term. I remember his mother as a senator, I mean when I was a boy, Hatty Carraway.

DAITCH: That's great. I think you can understand sometimes when someone who was so involved in the war, you can see why that would happen.

KAYSEN: Yes. And I don't know if you've ever been in Japan, but it's a very.... The Japanese are very different from us. It is a very strange culture. I've been there several times, and I was there not very long ago with my wife. I may have mentioned to you that she's an art historian.

DAITCH: Oh, no!

KAYSEN: She went to give a lecture there. They were opening a Rodin Museum, and she's a specialist on Rodin [Auguste Rodin]. It was a big international symposium. So I went with her, and we spent about a week traveling around. It was a lot of fun, and it was very interesting. But you do feel that you're in a very, very different place. And I would say, except maybe Vietnam, I've never been in a place which felt as strange, even though I've been in India and Pakistan. Of course no European country feels that different.

DAITCH: Right.

KAYSEN: So, you know, there was some.... It was natural that Carraway and his staff should feel that it was a funny situation. But they exercised so little imagination. I wasn't saying anything that people in the State Department hadn't been saying for years, but the Pentagon just brushed them aside. And it was the Pentagon that ran the place. Getting the President's interest did, rather slowly, lead to change. [CHANGE TO SIDE B OF TAPE]

DAITCH: It seems to me that there was a fair amount of this during the Kennedy Administration, maybe it was common among all administrations, but this almost a rivalry between and among some of the various government branches, especially the Pentagon and State.

KAYSEN: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. That's always.... I think that's built in.

DAITCH: And maybe it's not a bad thing in some ways, but in that era it just seems to me to have been such a.... It caused more problems than it actually helped with, in

terms of any effort at all to abate the Cold War.

KAYSEN: Yes. Although that was not so strong. State in the Kennedy period was dominated by the bureau called the EUR, the European Affairs Bureau, and that was very NATO-oriented, very Cold War-oriented, and keeping the Germans happy was a big task.

DAITCH: Right. We've talked about this a little bit before, but I'm fascinated with the kind of, I don't know, strength of will or imagination that it required from Kennedy to sort of step outside of that. Pentagon and State, he was surrounded by Cold Warriors.

KAYSEN: McNamara wasn't a Cold Warrior. In fact, when it came to discussing disarmament issues, William Foster, another protector of the right flank, a Republican appointee, the head of the Arms Control and Disarmament Administration, was much more of a Cold Warrior than McNamara. McNamara, for instance, was very much for the Test Ban. The State Department people were skeptical because they felt it would upset the Germans. Any dealings we had with Moscow upset the Germans, any bilateral dealings with Moscow upset the Germans. But the military were naturally Cold Warriors. That was, after all, their institutional business.

DAITCH: I find it fascinating how difficult that must have been. Oh, I have to go back to Okinawa just for a second. Maura gave me the name of some islands, the Rykus Islands?

KAYSEN: No, Ryukyu. That's the name of the chain of islands, of which Okinawa is the central island. It's not the biggest. There's a bigger island called Iriomote, which is way south, but it's almost uninhabited.

DAITCH: Oh, okay. So all the islands were part of this.

KAYSEN: The Ryukyus.

DAITCH: Okay. I had to ask about that. Although I suppose I could have looked them up in a geography book and figured that out. Let me do this. Let me flip through my notes and see if there's anything that I wanted to ask you that I haven't. Oh, I know something I wanted to ask you about that was.... Presidential recordings, of course, have been a big thing, and I just wondered whether you were shocked or surprised?

KAYSEN: Well, I was surprised. I certainly didn't know anything about them. I was surprised. I wasn't shocked. I mean I can see why presidents do it.

DAITCH: Well, I guess it was a new thing then. No one expected it.

KAYSEN: Yes. And it wasn't very good. I mean I have a bunch of tapes I'm supposed to listen to. I tried once, and had a hard time.

DAITCH: Were they just difficult to decipher, the quality?

KAYSEN: Yes.

DAITCH: Other people that you know, were they taken aback or angry?

KAYSEN: I don't know anyone who was angry. I never asked Ted Sorensen whether he knew about it.

DAITCH: It just seems to me, I guess it was such a new thing that it must have been a little unusual of course having just heard the Reeves interview about Nixon where the tape's played such a huge role. I have just one or two kind of off-the-wall questions. One of them is about environmental protection. It's just something that's near and dear to my heart, and I know that Kennedy was aware of environmental problems. Did he take much of an interest in it, that you know of?

KAYSEN:



DAITCH: Yes, we talked about that one.

KAYSEN: Yes. Well, yes, we did talk about that last time. Now I never.... It was way outside my area of concern.

DAITCH: Actually there are some things that could have come up, I don't know if they did at that time, but in terms of development, developing nations. I mean obviously now we recognize that there are lots of environmental consequences to certain kinds of development. Overpopulation, any of those things, population growth?

KAYSEN: There wasn't much discussion that I can remember at least.

DAITCH: Just not off the top of your head. That's okay. Oh, yes, one other question, about the reorganization of the Army, in which some of the reserves were inactivated. Apparently that was a big.... There was a lot of controversy about that. What was that about?

KAYSEN: I'm sure it was discussed between McNamara, Kennedy, and, you know, the Congressional people.

DAITCH: Right. Not something that you remember off the top of your head. Okay. All right. I think what I'm going to do is stop badgering you about questions that are off-the-wall things that you're probably not going to know anything about. If you don't mind, may I reserve the possibility of another future interview if I...?

KAYSEN: Sure.

DAITCH: I'll get these transcribed, and we'll see what we've got, and, you know, if there are other things as I'm sure there may be.

KAYSEN: Sure.

DAITCH: Well, thank you so much. I'm going to turn these.

KAYSEN: Not at all. [BREAK].... Last time.

DAITCH: Okay. One more story.

KAYSEN: It's a story connected with AID, and we didn't talk about it. There was some kind of meeting in the Cabinet Room. Sorensen was presiding over it. It had something to do with AID. As I remember, it was a discussion of Fowler Hamilton, who was the first AID administrator, and he didn't work one very well. And then David Bell became the administrator. But this was while Fowler was still the administrator. I've forgotten whether he was there or not. I remember Ted, I remember Ralph Dungan. I think Dave Bell was there. I was there. Probably one or two other people there. But Dave Bell was maybe my age or a year older. Dungan was my age or a year or two younger. Ted of course was quite a bit younger than me. And at the end of the meeting, as Sorensen looked around, we were sitting at the cabinet table.... There were no Cabinet officers present, it was just a bunch of staff guys and budget bureau people. And he looked around, and he said, "And this is the government of the United States."

DAITCH: Whippersnappers.

KAYSEN: Yes. And there was something to that. We were kind of young, and it was an era of enthusiasm. Another piece of atmospheric: Everybody worked very hard. I think it was hard on them, hard on the women and children, I think, the spouses. And I can't think of a single woman who was in any senior position. So it was all men. I think the women, it was a hard time for women. I mean it's not only the hours, but in some sense an awful lot of, how shall I say--the emotional reservoir was consumed by work.

And the story that came to my mind as I was talking before was one day, it was a kind of nice day. I think it was a spring day, but it may have been an autumn day. Pleasant weather. And Dungan and I met at the mess. We didn't have a date, you know.... We were eating lunch, and we were there at the same time, and we sat down and ate lunch. And I said

to him after we'd finished eating, I said, "Hey, Ralph, let's take a walk around the block."

And so we went out of the West Basement exit. And we walked out West Executive Avenue, and we literally walked all around the White House and came back and to the basement. And that takes ten or fifteen minutes. And I had the feeling I'd played hookey. I had the feeling, you know, that I'd actually not been on the telephone, writing a memorandum, reading a memorandum, looking for something.

DAITCH: Yes, that level of commitment.

KAYSEN: Yes, and the intensity. It was very intense.

DAITCH: There's something pretty exciting about that.

KAYSEN: Oh, yes.

DAITCH: I think I see what you mean about.... I can imagine how absorbing it must have been, and it must have taken away from the home life of a lot of them.

KAYSEN: Yes. I think it did.

DAITCH: You know, you mentioned that there were no women in the White House particularly. I knew that obviously. But there were also some studies that started to be initiated about the role of women in society and so on at the time. I assume that you all were younger men, and that there was some.... You know, many of you were married to professional women, I suppose.

KAYSEN: Well, when I think of.... Ted's marriage broke up, actually, Ted Sorensen. Mary Bundy wasn't a professional woman, my wife wasn't a professional, Weisner's wife wasn't a professional. No woman as a matter of fact, I would say that by and large.... I mean the people I'm talking about married.... Mary Bell, Dave Bell's wife, wasn't a professional woman. By and large the people I.... We were 40 plus or minus.... Were mostly not; they were mostly not. I think it was the next generation who started.

DAITCH: It's really an interesting time.

KAYSEN: Betty Tobin [Betty Tobin] wasn't, Johnnie Heller [Johnnie Heller] wasn't, Mary Gordon [Mary Gordon] wasn't, all these women.... My wife had jobs at various times in her life, but she was not a professional. And all these women were not. Bobby Solo [Barbara Solo] was a professional.

DAITCH: Who was she?

KAYSEN: Barbara Solo, Bob Solo's wife. I mean I'm just trying to think of people I knew well and whose wives I knew or came to know.

DAITCH: Yes, maybe the next generation. I don't know, but I was thinking about your wife. Your wife now is obviously a professional woman.

KAYSEN: Yes, yes.

DAITCH: And some of the other people I've talked to, either their marriages have split up and they remarried or....

KAYSEN: Yes, well, Gillian Sorensen is a professional woman. She's an assistant secretary general of the United States.

DAITCH: Well, that's professional. [Laughter]

KAYSEN: Yes. But I really didn't know the first Mrs. Sorensen because I never met her.

DAITCH: It would have been demanding.

KAYSEN: Yes.

DAITCH: But interesting, huh?

KAYSEN: Oh, it was very interesting, very exciting.

DAITCH: So many of the people I've talked to have looked back on this period with such nostalgia, more than I think that.... Even people who have worked for other administrations, in fact.

KAYSEN: Well, I never worked for another administration. I would say that this is one of the two most exciting times in my life. And the other one was when I was much, much younger, in fact 20 years before, during the Second World War when I was in a very funny unit. Well, I talked to you a little about that last time. That was very exciting, very intense. We were a bunch of kids, and we were operating way over our heads in hierarchical terms _____.

DAITCH: Yes. You can see where that would have been exciting.

KAYSEN: Yes.

DAITCH: Anyhow, again, thank you so much. I'm sorry I got you back on the roll again, but I appreciate those last stories. [ENE OF TAPE #3]

[END OF INTERVIEW #2]