

FOREWORD

Transcript Warning:

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

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Punctuation:

The following conventions are used throughout the transcripts:

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

Names:

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

Preparation:

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

Papers of John F. Kennedy

Presidential Recordings

Dictabelts

Dictabelt 19A

Conversation #2: President Kennedy and Dean Rusk

May 16, 1963, 10:30 a.m.

President: Hello.

Sec. Rusk: Mr. President.

President: Yes.

Sec. Rusk: Remember that very short message that we sent to . . . sent of the other day about dates for me?

President: Yes. Oh, yes.

Sec. Rusk: They have come back with an answer and suggested July 28th, which from our . . . I have just been talking to [L. Thompson] Tommy about it, and we think that this is very good from our point of view.

President: Oh, that's fine.

Sec. Rusk: It keeps things on ice and, uh . . . uh . . . indicates that things are not likely to blow up before then, [laughs]

President: I, uh . . . uh . . . talked to David Gore yesterday, and I said that David might be interested in what uh, what a draft which the Prime Minister might want to prepare a response to that letter that we both got.

Sec. Rusk: Right.

President: And we'll see what they have got say. I think we ought to think about sending somebody there. I think we want to look like we have gone the last mile.

Sec. Rusk: Right. Well, now we are preparing some alternative drafts here . . .

President: Good.

Sec. Rusk: . . . from different approaches. One approach would be simply to ask him really to take on this question of fact that he has asserted, that national means can do it. And try to get him to put up some technicians and scientists to talk with ours about the real possibility there. Pointing out that, in case there is no policy question, it is only a factual question.

President: Well, we might, uh, you know we talked in that letter about sending a special representative there.

Sec. Rusk: Right, right.

President: What about thinking about John McCloy to go there?

Sec. Rusk: Well, that is a . . . that's a real possibility. Tomorrow, we are going to propose that we try to use him on this [Gamal] Nasser, uh, the Near East disarmament problem.

President: I see.

Sec. Rusk: But in any event, he might be able to do both.

President: Yea, well, the other two that we . . . I was thinking about would be Ros Gilpatric or John. McCloy has got some advantages 'cause he is well and favorably known.

Sec. Rusk: Sure, sure. Well, that is a real possibility.

President: Ok, fine.