

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.

Dictabelt 23C, Item 23C1

July 24, 1963

JFK:¹ Yeah.

Rusk:² . . . I think this was the, where the center of resistance is likely to be.

JFK: That's right. Yeah.

Rusk: But, uh, but, uh . . .

JFK: What about, uh, Eisenhower³?

Rusk: I don't think, I don't think you'll get any telephone calls from this committee t-, about the job I did. [Laughter]

JFK: What about Eisenhower?

Rusk: Uh, he, uh, was interested and, uh, friendly to it. He said he would certainly not oppose it. John, John McCone,⁴ uh, is going up for a second trip a little later on to get him to issue a statement in favor.

JFK: Yeah.

Rusk: But, uh, he was quite interested, wary about any, any agreements with the Soviets and was sure that we were wary, too. Uh, but, uh, I think it was a trip worthwhile.

JFK: Yeah, yeah.

Rusk: So I think that we'll get, we can get a state-, I didn't ask him for it today . . .

JFK: Yeah.

Rusk: . . . for a statement of support.

¹ Continued from Belt 23B, Item 23B6.

² Dean Rusk, secretary of state.

³ Dwight David Eisenhower, former president.

⁴ John A. McCone, director of central intelligence.

JFK: Well, now what is your advice about when I might make a speech?

Rusk: It seems to me, uh, Mr. President, that, uh, that you might make it after, uh, Harriman⁵ has, and we have had a, the first, uh . . .

JFK: Conversation?

Rusk: . . . shot at the key committees bef-, when he gets back. Because I think that some of the senators might feel that if you, if you take it to the country straight away, uh, that this consultation process is very much interfered with. But I think if you could do it, uh, uh . . .

JFK: [Of course?], you don't have to wait too long.

Rusk: . . . say, about two days after he gets, the second day after he gets back and before the signing, that, uh, this might be about the right time from the point of view of management here. Now from a public opinion point of view, and how long curiosity can wait, um . . .

JFK: Yeah, I think, uh, well, let me just say I think that if we're going to have in the next twenty-four hours a communique saying the treaty's agreed to, that's, I mean that's the consultations with the senators and so on that's not so in-. . . . You know, we don't . . .

Rusk: Right.

JFK: . . . we got to hit the country while the country's hot. That's the only thing that makes any impression to these, goddamned senators.

Rusk: I see, uh huh, uh huh.

JFK: And you, we've been pretty generous with them as far as consultation. I would think that we don't want to wait just for their convenience. Uh, they'll move as the country moves. So, I think, we've got to go to the country while there, while there's maximum interest and while there's. . . . So my guess would be that we either ought to go Friday or Monday if he makes any progress in the next twenty-four hours.

Rusk: Uh huh, uh huh.

⁵ W. Averell Harriman, assistant secretary of state for Far Eastern affairs and head of the treaty delegation.

JFK: I would think, I think, your suggestion let Harriman come home and talk to me so that I mean at least it looks like we know what went on there. And then you can get up to the Hill, but I'd make that speech. So anyway we'll work on the speech and not make any decision about it for the next twenty-four hours . . .

Rusk: Fine. Fine.

JFK: . . . and then see what, you can keep thinking about it.

Rusk: Fine. Fine.

JFK: Okay.