

FOREWORD

Transcript Warning:

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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 5A

[This belt appears to have been in a somewhat deteriorated condition as received. The portions in brackets are either unintelligible or rendered with reservations.]

Item 5A.1

JFK: Hello.

Voice: Just a moment, sir. He'll be right with you.

[short pause]

JFK: Hello.

McCloy¹: Hello.

JFK: John? How are you?

McCloy: Hello. Fine. And how are you, Mr. President?

JFK: Very good, indeed. I just wanted . . . uh, are you going to be seeing Kuznetsov tonight?

McCloy: I saw him.

JFK: You've already seen him?

McCloy: I've seen him and given a full report to uh, . . . to, uh, Rusk about what it was. Do you want it?

JFK: Well, no. Here is . . . I just . . . I have . . . The Secretary's right here and so on. Here is what we are concerned about. Two or three things. First, we are going to have a surveillance tomorrow and, uh, General Ricky has told . . . we are going to get a warm reception, and then Kuznetsov says they've got no res[2-3 words?] 're all run by Cubans.

McCloy: Yes.

¹ John J. McCloy

JFK: Well, now, that means, uh, . . . that's number one. That's not a satisfactory situation. If we lose a plane over Cuba, you know what [several words?] [country?], and, uh, . . .

McCloy: Yes. I told him that three times tonight.

JFK: Right, and then, uh, . . . uh, that's . . . that's number one. Number two is [several words?] reimpose the quarantine, what we plan to do, and, uh, the Secretary will be in touch with you about this. [Word or two?] is to hail them and they would say where they're from, uh, where they're going and, uh, their cargo, which is how we passed that tanker last week.

McCloy: And you'd pass them. Uh-huh.

JFK: And then, uh, . . . uh, . . . the, uh, . . . without search. But . . . but the problem is that unless . . . if Castro on the one hand will not permit the U.N. to [1 or 2 words?] at the dock these ships, number one, and, uh, would not permit on-site, and the Russians won't permit us to inspect the sites themselves [several words?] and number three, the U.N. has been unable to come up with a substitute for our own surveillance. And number four, the [3 or 4 words?] fire at our planes and perhaps lose us one, and we will find ourselves in worse position. So [several words?] matters.

McCloy: Well, the, uh, . . . I . . . I tried to, uh, make it just [2 or 3 words?] just three times I told Kuznetsov that we had to, uh, in my judgment, [1 or 2 words?] judgment of the government, that we had to have surveillance until we had a proper [1 or 2 words?] substitute.

JFK: Yeah.

McCloy: And that I would hope that he would, uh, see to it that [several words?] shot at or shot down, because if we . . . they were we'd be facing danger again.

JFK: Yeah.

McCloy: [several words?] about the anti-aircraft being in the hands of the Cubans [several words?] my impression was to be that these sophisticated weapons were in the hands of the, uh, . . . of Soviet technicians, [several words?] 'cause we haven't got any soldiers there. They're in the hands of the Cubans. Well, I said, at any rate we are going to have to have this [1 word?] because, uh, we can't take a chance. The last photographs we had are clear. They don't show that the dismantling has started, [words?] Now, you have two days [several words?] take a look now and see if they really are dismantled or in the process of being dismantled, that would be rather [1 word?], uh, but, I, . . . but, I

repeated that . . . repeated three times that we were going to have to, uh, [1 word?] by surveillance, and, uh, that it would be disastrous if, uh, planes were shot down.

JFK: And you didn't get . . . ?

McCloy: That's all I said. He [several words?] nod. I didn't ask him . . . I deliberately didn't ask him for a deal on it because, uh, well, Adlai thought we shouldn't ask for it [several words?] the judgment of Ros Gilpatric, too.

JFK: OK. Well, now, let's see. What about the, uh, . . . d'you . . . our suggestion was you would notify him tonight about our procedure on the quarantine.

McCloy: [several words?] any obligation tonight.

JFK: No. I meant that you could tell him about what we are going to do on the quarantine.

McCloy: Oh, I could tell him that.

JFK: I think if he would get the message to Moscow and back again . . .

McCloy: I told him that, uh, . . . I don't think that there's such a great deal of pressure on that. What he said about the quaran-- . . . he said, you know [several words?] - -mantling. This was Kuznetsov. He said, well, you know, what we mean by dismantling is removal. He said, well, what I am talking about is we can . . . we can do the dismantling, the actual . . . the physical dismantling in a few days, but then, depending on how long, uh, it would take for us to, uh, get our ships there to take the stuff away and that . . . that requires U.S. action. And I'd like to have you think about that. And perhaps that is one of the problems we can talk about, but there was no, uh, urgency. Nothing about talking to him tonight about the quarantine. And I said, well we were prepared to, uh, if the Cubans would cooperate, we were prepared to have, uh, . . . uh, the . . . our Red Cross inspect on the piers and on . . . at the ports and there'd be no problem about the quarantine then. We could see very well that the, uh, the . . .

JFK: Right.

McCloy: . . . the ships were, uh, were . . . were . . . [sanitary?]

JFK: What'd he say to that?

McCloy: He nodded. And he said . . . He nodded on that, and he said that, uh, well, . . . did I have any . . . if I had any . . . had I any reports on the, uh, matter of the, uh, attitude of Castro. And I said, no, but we would probably would know a lot more about that when, uh, U Thant got up here; that I'd gotten rumors that, uh, he was rather recalcitrant, [several words?] our common object. It's our common objective to get those out just as fast as we can, . . . uh, the weapons out just as fast as we can. And maybe in this respect, uh, our objects are not in common with those of Castro and we may have to help you as against your friend.

JFK: What did . . . uh, are you going to see Mikoyan?

McCloy: Well, uh, he said to me that, uh, Mikoyan was coming here tomorrow.

JFK: Oh, it's tomorrow.

McCloy: He'd gotten a cable from him saying he was going to spend twenty-four hours here, or a little less, and that he had asked to see me. And he suggested that I might have dinner with, uh, Mikoyan and him tomorrow night . . .

JFK: Yeah.

McCloy: . . . at the, uh, at the Soviet, uh, headquarters here. But, he said that specifically Mikoyan had asked whether it would be possible for him to see me on the way to Havana.

JFK: Yeah, well, I think that he ought to see you and get these points.

McCloy: Yeah.

JFK: Well, now, what we need to just take care of tonight are . . . are two or three things. First, to tell Kuznetsov, uh, maybe you can tell him by phone, what we are going to do on the quarantine. You know we are just going to hail them like we did that tanker, [off phone to someone in room with him] What was the name of that tanker? [back to McCloy] The Bucharest. The procedures we followed with the Bucharest are what we will follow on the quarantine.

McCloy: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

JFK: It will be a hail and I guess it's . . . they say where they'd come, where they are going, and their cargo, and we'll pass them.

McCloy: Uh-huh.

JFK: You'll tell them that?

McCloy: Well, I don't see any necessity to call him up tonight about it. And I . . . My judgment would be not to . . .

JFK: . . . tell him . . .

McCloy: . . . uh, tell him.

JFK: All right. Well, that's number one. The s-- . . .

McCloy: That . . . that, uh, . . . that I would tell him at the proper time.

JFK: All right . . . well, 'cept we are gonna put back the thing in the morning, you see.

McCloy: Yeah, that is right.

JFK: I mean, we're putting it back at dawn.

McCloy: Uh-huh.

JFK: I assume that they'll do that anyway.

McCloy: Yeah. I think that I could talk to him about that, or talk to him tomorrow about it.

JFK: OK.

McCloy: My feeling is that if I call up tonight it looks a little bit as if I'm . . .

JFK: . . . anxious . . .

McCloy: . . . a little bit . . . a little bit . . .

JFK: Now, the . . . now, you've made . . . you don't think there's anything more we can say about this? Because we don't want to lose a plane tomorrow. About this firing? Do you think that you have made that as strong as you can make it?

McCloy: I made that as strong as I . . . I . . . I stated three times, uh, that it would be disastrous if we, uh, . . .

JFK: OK.

McCloy: . . . the planes were shot down. He did come back with the business about the Cubans. He didn't make any [commitment?] about it. I didn't ask for a commitment. But I . . . He certainly is on full notice that our planes are going in, and that it would be a very serious thing if they were shot down.

JFK: I see.

McCloy: Now, Adlai, I think, feels that, uh, . . . that it wouldn't be wise to . . . to restart this . . . this surveillance tomorrow. We ought another . . . to let another day go by. I can't see that another day would help very much. Seems we'd have the same problem and maybe a more difficult problem in . . .

JFK: Yeah. Well, we're gonna go ahead. We got . . . we're gonna go ahead with the surveillance.

McCloy: Well, Adlai has . . . I think I ought to state his view. And he . . . he said that . . . that he thought until we had a chance to talk to U Thant and get a full picture of the thing we, uh, . . .

JFK: When . . . when're they gonna see U Thant?

McCloy: He won't be here . . . apparently not going to see him. He doesn't get in until nine-thirty. He sent word that he is going straight, uh, to his . . .

JFK: . . . house . . .

McCloy: . . . to his house. He is not coming to the United Nations, and will talk to us tomorrow morning.

JFK: I see. You don't know what time?

McCloy: No. I should think the first thing tomorrow morning.

JFK: All right. Well, I tell you what, we'll, uh, hold up the surveillance until you have had the conversation with U Thant.

McCloy: Uh-huh.

JFK: So, uh, 'cause, I mean, we can just put the surveillance on for the afternoon.

McCloy: Uh-huh. Now, uh, . . . uh, I guess that's all. I guess that's . . . well, the full story of my . . .

JFK: Wait just a second, the Secretary . . .

McCloy: . . . conversation with Kuznetsov I gave you, and you'll have . . . you'll have a telegram on . . . uh, it's obvious that he's trying to . . .

Rusk²: Jack?

McCloy: Yeah.

Rusk: We've . . . we got . . . we've got to have a report from U Thant tonight on . . . on how he sees the situation on his visit to Havana.

McCloy: Uh-huh.

Rusk: So, we really . . . we really got to insist on that.

McCloy: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

Rusk: Now, uh, . . .

McCloy: OK.

Rusk: So let's get somebody over there. Uh, it could be, uh, you or it could be, uh, George Ball or . . . or Ros Gilpatric, or anybody . . .

McCloy: Uh-huh. Yeah. Uh-huh.

Rusk: . . . on the team there. But I think we oughta get somebody over there, to either U Thant or General Ricky.

McCloy: Yes. Yes.

Rusk: Because this could affect a good many decisions we're having to make here.

² Dean Rusk

McCloy: Uh-huh. Uh, OK. I'll . . . I'll . . . I'll lay that on.

Rusk: And call me when you . . . when you get the report on it, hunh?

McCloy: OK. I'll either call you or I'll have them . . . them call you and I'd like to get it first hand, so I don't have to, uh, transmit it by courier.

Rusk: Yeah. OK. Fine.

McCloy: OK. Well . . .

Rusk: Thank you.

[phone hangs up]

Dictabelt 5A

Item 5A.2

[begins in mid-conversation]

Voice: . . . I put you on the spot this morning at breakfast with, uh, Dwight Eisenhower and . . . and two visitors who, uh, wanted his advice on whether they should talk to the President of the United States about a . . . a problem, and asked me what would he have done if they had come to him with this. He, uh, urged that they see the president. Now, I don't know, uh, . . . I said, well, I guess the best thing on this is to, uh, call, uh, call Ted Clifton. And Dwight Eisenhower said, go ahead and . . . and call him and see if these two men can get in.

Clifton³: All right.

Voice: Is there any chance? In the next couple days?

Clifton: Oh, yeah.

Voice: It is Clarence Francis. You know him, don't you? The old General Foods man.

Clifton: Oh, yeah.

Voice: And Egbert, of Studebaker.

Clifton: All right.

Voice: Hmm?

Clifton: Right. Now, uh, when you say General Foods . . . I'm trying to . . .

Voice: It was General Foods. He was head of General Foods.

Clifton: Yeah. Right. And, uh, . . . these . . . these two men, uh . . .

Voice: Uh, now wait. The president knows him, uh . . .

³ Chester V. Clifton

Clifton: Right.

Voice: . . . they were together on the, uh, on the Hoover Commission.

Clifton: Oh, yeah. They . . . He knows 'em both.

Voice: Yeah.

Clifton: Now, the idea is that they should get down here and see him. Where do we get in touch with them?

Voice: well, uh, they're here in New York. Damn . . . uh, Bob has their phone number. They have a plane here. They can get down anytime if they can get ten minutes . . .

Clifton: All right. And is it an economic problem or . . .?

Voice: That's right. That's right. Twelve thousand jobs.

Clifton: All right.

Voice: Now, they spread the whole case before Dwight Eisenhower and, uh, his reaction was that it was a, uh, it . . . it was presidential level.

Clifton: Uh-huh. Well, all right. That, uh, . . . He oughta know. And, uh, let me, uh, . . . uh, lemme run this through the mill. And you think I can get hold of Egbert at Studebaker?

Voice: They're both in New York . . . damn! I just . . .

Clifton: But Schultz knows where?

Voice: Yeah. Bob just took off with somebody.

Clifton: Are you all staying there in . . .

Voice: . . . the phone numbers. Oh, wait, here they . . . here it is.

Clifton: All right.

Voice: Uh, Yukon 6-7990 . . .

Clifton: 7990.

Voice: Yeah. Or, Yukon 6-7979.

Clifton: All right.

Voice: This is a helluva time to ask for an appointment.

Clifton: Well, we'll see wha-- . . . I'll get this organized.

Voice: Yeah.

Clifton: OK.

Voice: But Dwight, uh, Eisenhower seemed to think that it was . . .

Clifton: OK.

Voice: . . . well, it doesn't seem . . . he said right out that he thought it was presidential level.

Clifton: OK.

Voice: Um-hmm.

Clifton: Well, we'll get after it.

Voice: OK.

Clifton: All right, Kevin. What . . . Are you all staying in New York today?

Voice: Uh, . . . overnight. We've got, uh, . . . Well, we had Council for Foreign Relations last night, and I don't know what the hell there's . . . oh, uh, Mr. President tonight.

Clifton: Oh, yeah. OK. All right.

Voice: In the meantime we're resting. Dammit.

Clifton: OK. I'll see you, Kevin.

Voice: All right.

Clifton: Bye.

/phone hangs up/

Dictabelt 5A

Item 5A.3

[recording begins in mid-conversation]

- Rusk⁴: . . . with respect to, say, peace in the Caribbean, so that it would not be necessarily geographically limited to Cuba.
- Voice: Yeah. Well, I think that's right. Uh, the . . . the . . . the terms on which the [1 or 2 words?] . . .
- Rusk: But, . . . but in relation to invasion. Not in relation to a lot of other things.
- Voice: Well, that's right. What . . . what he talked to . . . to . . . uh, the, uh, Castro about was some continuing [people?], presumably in Cuba, uh, itself.
- Rusk: Yeah.
- Voice: But [1 or 2 words?] have a commission that could travel and, uh, . . . uh, so on.
- Rusk: Yeah.
- Voice: Now, uh, one other thing, uh, the question of the . . . the return of Major Anderson's body came up. The, uh, . . . uh, Secretary General feels that, uh, well, Castro said that he was prepared to do that through the U.N.
- Rusk: Yeah.
- Voice: Uh, the Secretary General feels that the best way to have that done is for us to ask the Swiss, immediately, to try to arrange that, and to have the body shipped to Guantanamo, where we could fly it back.
- Rusk: Uh-huh.
- Voice: So, I think you might want to set the wheels in motion down there on that score.

⁴ Dean Rusk

Rusk: Yeah. OK. Yeah. All right. Fine. Now, umh, there is no question here, really, that . . . that the SAMs are under Russian control.

Voice: Yeah.

Rusk: And so, we, uh, we want to . . . we want to find an opportunity here to press on a . . . on a . . . at some point to get all Russian-controlled and manned equipment out of there, you see.

Voice: Well, uh, you know, uh, McCloy is having dinner with Mikoyan tonight.

Rusk: Yeah.

Voice: It would be a good way to do that.

Rusk: Yeah.

Voice: Uh, and . . . and to do it particularly on the . . . on the ground that the real security, in Cuba would be with some kind of U.N. presence.

Rusk: Yeah. Yeah. OK. Fine.