

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 16A

Conversation #5: President Kennedy and William Tyler

March 28, 1963

President: Bill.

Mr. Tyler: Yes, sir.

President: On this [Walt W.] Rostow paper business, I see [John] Diefenbaker said that it's completely false. That he is carrying a secret administration document. And said, "that is the 'root cause of much of his bitterness' toward the United States. It was carried by the Southern News Service, a Canadian agency. The denial was published by the Winnipeg Tribune, a Southern . . . Southam newspaper together with the report written by Charles Lynch from Ottawa." Now, then, it goes on and makes the document look much worse than it is. Said Lynch wrote the document secret as a White House working paper and brought to Ottawa by President Kennedy's party in May 1961. The story said it is reported it come to Diefenbaker's hands "through carelessness on the part of the Kennedy entourage." It was prepared, Lynch wrote, by Walt Rostow, one of Kennedy's advisers, that guarded for the President in his talk with Diefenbaker and his speech in the Canadian Parliament in May 1961. The story said the Canadian Prime Minister had read . . . had had the documents for almost two years. That the U.S. State Department press release taking issue with his defense policy speech in the Commons early this year "cause him to retrieve the document and threaten to make it public." Lynch's story said according to these reports, the document advised the President that Canada should be "pushed" to accept nuclear weapons under joint control, to join the OAS (that is accurate), to decrease their trade with China and Cuba and ratify the Columbia River Treaty. (That's not in it at all, is it?)

Mr. Tyler: No.

President: Possible pressures to be brought to bear in achieving these objectives were the threats of cuts in U.S. defense production sharing and the possibility of quotas or increased tariffs against Canadian gas and oil, lead and zinc and timber

products entering the United States market. (Of course that is completely untrue.) Now, it sounds to me, though, as if he might have leaked this; Diefenbaker.

Mr. Tyler: Yes, it occurred to me when I heard that.

President: Because the way it is leaked, it makes us look lousy and explains his bitterness. Instead of saying the reason that Kennedy is bitter at Diefenbaker is because he stole it through the carelessness and uh, but now he has issued statements saying that this is wholly false. Of course he is a liar. Now the question really is what reaction this is having up there and what we ought to do about it.

Mr. Tyler: Yes, I think we ought to get some reaction from Ottawa.

President: Do you want to get in touch with them. And say, uh, of course, the story's here, uh, this is #194 on the AP.

Mr. Tyler: #194 on the AP.

President: Course, the story makes it look like, uh, it is a garbled version of our paper, making it look worse than it is, number one. Number two, it makes it look like it is explaining why Diefenbaker is sore, instead of why we are sore. Number three, it looks like carelessness instead of like maybe they stole it. I mean, there is none of that. And it is just the question of what reaction it is having. If it is helping Diefenbaker, we ought to think about knocking it down and the question would be how. It ought to be just Canadian. We ought to get the actual, uh, perhaps consider whether they ought to leak in Canada the true version of what it said. Plus Diefenbaker's threat to release it last year because I invited [Lester] Pearson to the Nobel dinner and so on and so forth. Or maybe we just ought to shut up. That, I don't know.

Mr. Tyler: Yes, we will get the reaction from Ottawa, Mr. President.

President: Ok, bye.