

Carl Kaysen Oral History Interview – JFK #2, 7/15/1966
Administrative Information

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Biographical Note

Kaysen was a professor at Harvard University (1946-1966); Deputy Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs (1961-1963); and director at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton (1966-1976). In this interview Kaysen primarily focuses on the Limited Test Ban Treaty and the Nuclear Test Ban Conference negotiations in Moscow in 1963, among other issues.

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Carl Kaysen
JFK #2

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Second Oral History Interview

With

CARL KAYSEN

July 15, 1966

By Joseph E. O'Connor

For the John F. Kennedy Library

KAYSEN: Well, I think the question of where the idea for the limited test ban came from is very hard to say. In a real sense it came from Khrushchev [Nikita S. Khrushchev]. We had, as you remember, talked about a limited test ban, that is an atmospheric ban, over a number of times. There was the appeal that Kennedy [John F. Kennedy] addressed to Khrushchev just after the first test. There was the joint appeal with Macmillan [M. Harold Macmillan] before we started testing. All these things indicated that

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we would be interested in a limited test ban if we could get one. As you may remember there was an open unanswered letter from Kennedy and Macmillan to Khrushchev in which they had indicated their desire to resume the negotiations on the test ban. There had been a series of negotiations conducted in New York in which William Foster represented the United States, David Ormsby Gore [William David Ormsby-Gore Harlech] the United Kingdom, and Federenko [Nikolai Federenko], the Soviet representative to the UN, the USSR. These were taking place December '62 and January '63. The basic discussion had been about an underground test ban, and the discussion really never joined issue. The Soviets kept talking about the number of inspections, Khrushchev talked about what you mean by inspection, et cetera, and nothing ever focused. After those

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discussions broke down – I can't remember the exact date of this – we wrote a joint letter to Khrushchev indicating that we wanted to resume the talks and suggesting that we would be willing to resume them any place. This invitation or request for an invitation or suggestion – however you want to describe it – had not been answered for some time. My memory – but it's not at all good and the documents will show this – is that a month or more elapsed, in fact several months, between the sending of that communication and some response.

Now let's move right up to late May, early June of '63. The President was scheduled to make the commencement speech at American University. Sometime in April perhaps, or late April or early May, Ted

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Sorensen [Theodore C. Sorensen] sent around a memorandum to the usual people saying, "The President wants to make a speech on peace. Do you have any ideas?" And a variety of ideas poured in. Now, a week and a little bit before that speech was due to be made we had a drafting meeting. This again proceeded in the usual way. Sorensen did a very rough first draft. This was a closely held speech, by the way. And a committee consisting, as I remember, of the Secretary of State and Fisher [Adrian S. Fisher], probably Adam Yarmolinsky from the Pentagon, Arthur Schlesinger [Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.], Mac Bundy [McGeorge Bundy] and myself from the White House – I don't think there was anybody else on the committee, but again I would not be sure – went over that draft, made changes, comments, all

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the rest of it in the usual way, and sent it back to Sorensen. As I remember the timing of this, Sorensen got it on Thursday. Monday was the tenth, the day the speech was made. The President had gone off. He was going to make a speech in Los Angeles, then a speech at the mayor's conference on Sunday in Honolulu, and then come back; fly in and really get off the plane and go to the commencement and deliver the speech. So we were quite tight on time. In the final draft of that speech the President had decided to include the offer of the moratorium on atmospheric tests. That was not known in the draft that we looked at and it was decided by the President presumably in discussion with Sorensen, perhaps a few others, I don't know...

O'CONNOR: Not in discussion with you.

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KAYSEN: Not in the general discussion at all. I knew it when I got the speech and I got some instructions from the President. Parenthetically, Bundy was away on that weekend and I was dealing with the matter. The instructions were to – and I talked with the President about it – the instructions were to check with the Secretary of Defense and the Under Secretary of Defense, with the Secretary of State – you see, these people just hadn't seen it yet – to inform the chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, not to get his views, and to have a conversation with General Taylor [Maxwell

D. Taylor], the Chairman of the Chiefs; and make sure that if he wanted to make any comment he should make some comment; and to check with Ambassador Thompson [Llewellyn E. Thompson, Jr.]. Now, it happened this turned out to be a little bit of an

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operation. Thompson was in San Francisco. Bob McNamara [Robert S. McNamara] was making a commencement speech at Williamstown, et cetera, et cetera. I think the one thing that's worth putting into the record at some length is Taylor's comment. Do you want to shut the recorder off for a ...

O'CONNOR: Surely.

KAYSEN: Parenthetically I think these comments on General Taylor ought to be treated as he would wish to treat them since it should be at his discretion how these comments which I attribute to him are used.

O'CONNOR: He will see then this part of it and nothing else...

KAYSEN: Yes, if he would then that would be fine. I called him, having arranged for him to get a copy of the speech. And the substance of our conversation was that he personally thought

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this was essentially a political decision, that personally he thought it was a good decision but he felt that officially he shouldn't have any comment on it because it was a political decision, it was the President's decision to make; that he thought unnecessary and perhaps unwise, although I'm not sure those were his exact words; to show the draft to his colleagues or the chiefs, that their comments were predictable and he felt no purpose could be served. And I, as I was instructed to, made sure that he had nothing personally that he wished to say to the President. When the President was traveling the White House staff handled communications with him and therefore we would have been the natural transmitters of such as message. McNamara and Gilpatric [Roswell L. Gilpatric] were enthusiastic. Rusk [Dean Rusk] had no

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comment. He thought it was fine. Ball thought it was fine. I guess I talked to Foster too, as a matter of fact. I didn't list him in this group. And then Llewellyn Thompson thought the offer and the way it was made was fine.

I transmitted that message onward to the President, probably that one to Sorensen. He was spending a day in the Los Angeles airport waiting for the President and writing the speech for the conference of mayors, having written on the way out a speech to be delivered in Los Angeles. The next interesting thing that happened was that Khrushchev sent a

message. Now, Khrushchev had made a speech in Berlin. And if I remember it the speech was the week before, the 3rd, or it may have been the 4th of June.

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O'CONNOR: Was it this that precipitated the President's decision to include this.

KAYSEN: Possibly.

O'CONNOR: We had heard that there were rumors coming through Macmillan/Khrushchev, or from Harold Wilson...

KAYSEN: Yes, possibly. But the speech simply indicated the Soviets were interested in a negotiation. Exactly what was said is not in my mind now. Of course you'll have a text and that's clear. But, the President may have discussed this with a lot of people but I wasn't one of them. Actually I don't think he discussed it with a lot of people. But you have to, you know, look into that. The likeliest people would be McNamara, Bundy, Sorensen. Khrushchev had made a speech. What was interesting is that sometime, Friday I believe, by which time everybody had left, we got a message in

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from Khrushchev. And the message said, "Let's resume the negotiations in Moscow. We suggest such and such a date and who's your negotiator?" Now of course that changed the complexion of the speech. I immediately called, got hold of the President, indicated what the substance of the message was and was authorized to talk to the State Department, to get up a note and to get some suggestions for negotiators. Let me stop a minute.

O'CONNOR: You want me to shut this off?

KAYSEN: Yes.
After talking to the President I also talked to Sorensen and indicated to him what my instructions had been, and that I had been instructed to call Rusk and to get suggestions for a negotiator, and Rusk was going to invite a negotiator. The President indicated that Rusk and he had discussed this possibility and that the first choice was McCloy [John Jay McCloy]. I

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called Rusk and gave him the message, essentially. Rusk called McCloy, called me back and indicated that McCloy did not want to do this. He said at the time that McCloy's first preference was to be available for possible Middle Eastern negotiations. You may remember that there was a problem with the Yemenese war and we'd been trying to deal with that. In the end if you.... It's just worth noting that it was Bunker [Ellsworth Bunker] who finally had to deal with it. Then Rusk and I talked about who the second choice might be, and Rusk

suggested Averell Harriman [William Averell Harriman]. The minute I got finished talking with Rusk I called up Sorensen and said essentially, “This is Rusk’s suggestion. I’m going to call the President and tell him that it’s Rusk’s suggestion, and you be sure that you’re around him tomorrow morning because tomorrow morning there’s going

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to be a message from Rusk saying that he’s reconsidered it and that he wants Bill Foster or somebody like that. That’s my prediction.” I then called the President. The President’s response was to say, “Well, if it’s Rusk’s choice that’s fine. I just think that’s fine,” or words to that effect in a very characteristic fashion which indicated two things, that he was surprised that Rusk had named Harriman and that he was gratified. Early the next morning Rusk called and asked me to send – rather formally – asked me to send a message to Los Angeles where the President was then – this would have been Saturday sometime – saying he wondered whether Harriman was the right guy, and perhaps, and so on.

O’CONNOR: Did he give reasons why he...

KAYSEN: Well, no. Rusk wouldn’t have treated me as

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an equal particularly so that he wouldn’t have given me reasons.

O’CONNOR: You don’t really understand why he initially selected Harriman?

KAYSEN: Oh yes, I do understand it. This is a speculation and not a fact because I don’t know what...

O’CONNOR: We’re interested in speculations as well as facts.

KAYSEN: I understand. I don’t know what went on in his mind. I think he first thought about that, and then in the interim he talked to George Ball and George Ball, who is very strongly for NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] and worried about relations with eastern Europe probably said to him, “Look, Averell will go into Moscow and he’ll upset the Germans, and the Germans don’t like it. We can’t control them, and you and I will lose our grip on this matter,” essentially something like that. And I’m sure.... Well,

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as the story indicates I anticipated this, and I don’t say this to pat myself on the back. Anybody who knew the people involved would have anticipated this. I think basically Rusk is a rather timid man, and his first thought was, “Whom would the President want?” And his response to that was Averell Harriman. And then when he had the chance to talk to George

Ball and maybe some of the other people there – maybe he talked to Foster and Foster was annoyed that this was taken away from him. I don't know that. I can be sure however of the facts. But fortunately we had thought about this and the President indicated that he would stick with his choice and that we would stick with Harriman.

O'CONNOR: Did any other names come up, such as Llewellyn Thompson or anybody else?

KAYSEN: What came up in the State Department or in the Presidential party I do not know. No

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other name came up in the conversation I had with the Secretary. I don't think I had a conversation – no, I didn't have a conversation with George Ball; just a conversation with Rusk. Well, that's how Harriman got in. We then made some adjustments in the speech. We sent a message back to Khrushchev. We got a message from Khrushchev which named a date. And I remember, as a matter of fact, having a telephone conversation from my bedside – I used to have a White House line there – about, it must have been about 3 a.m. Monday morning. I was having a telephone conversation with Ted Sorensen in the plane as the plane was flying – I'm trying to think where it picked me up – it must have been pretty much crossing the West Coast by then from Honolulu. We were, you know, getting the dates and whatever details the exchange of messages occasioned right, so

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that the speech could announce that we had been in communication with Chairman Khrushchev. Then again the text of the speech will show all that. And that's act I. Let's just stop here.

The next problem was the composition of the delegation. We had a discussion and agreed to keep the delegation small.

O'CONNOR: That was probably Harriman's choice, wasn't it?

KAYSEN: Well, it was the President's choice and Harriman's choice. But the important point is that the President backed Harriman up. There was a certain amount of discussion in which Bundy and I played a very important role about who it should be. And after a good deal of discussion we settled on the delegation that went over. Now, Frank Long and Frank Press went over on the delegation. Frank Long was the assistant director of the

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arms control in the Disarmament Agency for Science and Technology. Frank Press was a professor of geophysics then at Cal Tech [California Institute of Technology], now at M.I.T.

[Massachusetts Institute of Technology], who is the leading American, one of the world's leading experts on earthquakes. And he was a member of the President's Scientific Advisory Committee. The fact that Press and Long went along indicates that we hadn't, at that time, had a clear idea of what the range of discussion was. We were prepared to discuss underground treaties. The President repeated what he'd already said to Foster, namely he had authorized Foster to go down to five inspections. And this was true in the December negotiation. We had some discussions involving Wiesner [Jerome B. Wiesner], Harold Brown, the Director of Defense Research and Engineering, Bundy, myself, Fisher and

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Foster from the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. We had some discussion about whether we could go to less than five if necessary. We did not have an authority to go to less than five but we had discussed and had discussed with the President a number of schemes including geographical zoning.... [recorder turned off] We had discussed a number of schemes, including averaging inspections over a period of years so that the average number was three, but up to five could be used in a year. We had discussed the possibilities of distributing the inspections by different zones with different codes for different zones because there are some zones with higher exploitivity in which the problem of, is it an earthquake or is it a test, is important; while there are other zones in which earthquake activity is so low that a test would be suspicious. And this scheme would have an advantage from the

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Soviet point of view that he populated centers, the centers of certain military installations and so on, were in the low earthquake area. And the high earthquake area was out on the Pacific coast on the Kurile Islands. We didn't have any specific authority on that. We had had a series of meetings – again very small; mostly with the delegation plus people like Yarmolinsky and Harold Brown from the Defense Department, the ACDA [Arms Control & Disarmament Agency] people, Wiesner and Spurgeon Keeny, who worked in Wiesner's office, Bundy and myself – a series of meetings in the White House – and a few people from the Department other than the people in the delegation – to discuss the negotiation instructions, to discuss certain other problems. One problem for instance, in Khrushchev's speech it was clear that he had said something indicating

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a tie between the treaty and a non-aggression pact, which was one of the things that worried us most. Again, we didn't go with a specific instruction saying we won't have a non-aggression pact.

O'CONNOR: The specific instructions you did have said something to the effect that the non-aggressions pact could be in the interest – you did have some

authority – in the interest of the United States. You did have some authority...

KAYSEN: That's right, but we had some conditions about a non-aggression pact including Berlin, the status of Berlin, and so on. And of course the State Department was worried about a non-aggression pact. It would have upset the Germans terribly, and so on.

Now, in addition to the actual instructions, which were mainly drafted by me and revised in this committee and discussed with Harriman,

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Bundy, and I had a meeting with the President with nobody else just before we took off. And there certain other points were made clear. One was the President made a very broad, general statement saying, "I've got a lot of credit in the Bank with the Germans." This is quoted in Schlesinger essentially as I told it to him. "I've got a lot of credit in the bank with the Germans and I will use some of it up for this purpose, remember that." Second, the President said that he gave Harriman very broad discretionary authority to explore with the Russians the question of what we might do jointly or not jointly in relation with the Chinese; to discuss with the Russians their interest in preventing further development of Chinese military power, our joint interests in dealing

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with the Chinese.

O'CONNOR: He had evidently talked about that particular question before. Do you know what he had in mind?

KAYSEN: The President?

O'CONNOR: Yes. Hints of that had come up several times. It sort of came up when you were in Moscow.

KAYSEN: Yes, I think the answer is simply that he foresaw essentially what had been happening and said, "We're ultimately going to find ourselves perhaps to some extent on the same side in relation to the Chinese – the same side as the Russians in relation to the Chinese – let's see how they think about this." Now, as you are aware, and as the records and telegrams show, all attempts to talk Chinese, to the Russians about the Chinese were flat failures. Khrushchev refused.

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He was quite rude to Harriman whenever Harriman brought up the Chinese. Harriman, Culver [Herrin F. Culver], and I had a session with Khrushchev. This session was before the

dinner at the Kremlin, that Khrushchev gave to the two delegations. We had a long session with Khrushchev, mostly devoted to Southeast Asia in which Harriman tried to talk about Laos, tried to talk about South Vietnam and so on. And he just got nowhere. Khrushchev was very rude, very tough. He just wasn't interested. In the opening session when Khrushchev welcomed us and then went into a long rambling talk about agriculture and everything else Harriman tried to bring up the issue of China and Khrushchev again said, you know, "If you want to talk about China, go to China. You can't talk about China here." And he reminded Harriman that Harriman had tried

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to get from Russia to China in '59 I think it was, or in '60 when Harriman as a private citizen made trips to the Soviet Union; and that he hadn't been able to. Khrushchev's words – and I don't remember them precisely – were something along the line of, "If you asked Gromyko [Andrei A. Gromyko]," I believe, "to arrange a trip to China for you and he didn't do it, it's good that he didn't do it. If he'd done it I would have fired him. We're not running a passport office for the Chinese." So that it was clear that the Soviets simply were not interested in talking to the United States about China at that point. Harriman thought – and of course he will have told you himself – that the conflict with China was the main reason for the Soviets interest in

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getting a treaty.

O'CONNOR: Did you agree with that?

KAYSEN: I really wouldn't have had much of an independent opinion, but it seemed a reasonable proposition. Now, the other point on which Kennedy spoke to us – I mean he didn't put anything in writing – was about de Gaulle [Charles A. de Gaulle]. Now, there is probably some place in the record, some drafts of the letter to de Gaulle and the letter which we actually sent to de Gaulle. The letter didn't go quite as far as the conversation. In the conversation Kennedy indicated that if the French were willing to sign the treaty he might be ready to contemplate a deal in giving them nuclear warheads for their bombs, or some deal. Again, this wasn't terribly explicit. It was just a thought, and we never got it done.

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Now I do remember this. I made a memorandum of the conversation with Kennedy. I don't have a copy. I don't know what happened to it. Bundy's papers must have had a copy. As far as I know there were three copies; one that Harriman and I had, one that Mrs. Lincoln [Evelyn N. Lincoln] had, and one that Bundy had. This was not seen by other people. Now, you're probably aware from the State Department and White House files that the traffic on this was very closely controlled, and that it was controlled so that essentially the negotiation

could be conducted by the President. Now I don't know that there's anything special to say about this that isn't in the record, about the character of negotiation. We made a very full report every night. Essentially I would draft a report. I acted as executive secretary. Harriman would correct it, often

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he would draft it himself. He was a very good and tough man to work for. He was very fussy about what was said. There was no question but the report showed what Harriman thought. And we were fairly cautious about acting within our instructions. The records will show that there was a tremendous flap about this notion that the wording of the treaty would prohibit us from using nuclear weapons in time of war. We all thought that this was absolute nonsense. When, on instruction and against his own instincts, Harriman brought this up with Gromyko...

O'CONNOR: Yes, I've...

KAYSEN: You've got that. Gromyko just gave him a look of withering contempt like, "How could you ask such a foolish question?"

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O'CONNOR: One thing that did interest me though, in getting back to your instructions, it seemed to me that you had some authority initially, the delegation did, to discuss a non-aggression pact. After you got over there...

KAYSEN: Oh, we had some authority to discuss a non-aggression pact. Our real instruction was to see what we could do about it; to separate them if possible; to get a Berlin clause in if we were going to talk about it. What happened is that the non-aggression pact apparently wasn't really important. When we pushed it off, the Soviets accepted it. And finally all that was left was the statement in the communiqué. And Kohler [Foy D. Kohler] and I, I remember, went to the drafting committee. Ordinarily Fisher and McNaughton [John T. McNaughton], who was the Defense Department

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man on the team, both of whom are lawyers – and Fisher is a very experienced and distinguished international lawyer – were our representatives on the drafting committee. The way this thing worked the drafting committee met every morning, and the plenary met every afternoon. But when the drafting committee was on the communiqué Kohler and I went, and I guess Bill Tyler [William R. Tyler, Jr.] too, the State Department fellow who was then Assistant Secretary for European Affairs. We went and I really did most of the talking. And it was easy in the sense that the Soviet draft came in with a very strong statement about how we

were committing ourselves to get a non-aggression pact afterwards. And we had a statement which said we had committed ourselves to discuss it

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with our allies with a view toward making progress, or some language like that. There was a certain amount of fooling around, but I would say it was relatively easy in that whatever changes there were were excessive. This, remember, was the committee, the drafting committee, not the principles, and whatever we agreed was ratified by Gromyko and his bosses without any change. So that part was easy. Now the crucial question was the question over the wording of depositories and the proceedings for signatories, signatures by countries that the other countries didn't recognize. There was some interchange between Harriman and Gromyko which was fairly tough. We had been instructed to raise the issue of China – you know, Formosa, Nationalist China, the Republic of China – as they had raised the issue of East Germany. We had some kind of a draft piece of

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paper on it. Gromyko rejected the piece of paper. He wouldn't receive it. And he said, "If I received this piece of paper I would have to say things which would be unacceptable to you, and here are the kinds of things I would have to say," and so on. And it was at that point that we – shut it off for a minute.

I was talking about the discussion of unrecognized countries. This was on the Thursday of the second week as I remember it. The session got very heated. Harriman felt that he'd gone to the limit of his instructions and he wanted to adjourn. And all of us felt that the issue was an unrealistic one, an unimportant one in the delegation. On the other hand we had our instructions. At this point I suggested to Kohler that perhaps I could call Washington and see what was what.

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My own reason for this may have been conference fever and the desire to get something. It may not have been. My feeling was that we had a lot of momentum and it would be a mistake to break up over another weekend, and that we would do better just to finish if we could. I had thought to go back to the embassy, but Kohler pointed out that the telephones were tapped in the Embassy and it was just as easy to call from the Foreign Ministry and you get faster service, because they have to wake up the line watchers and so on if you call from the Embassy. So he asked one of the people there and I was taken to a room and called up the White House. And they said, just for the whimsy of it, that on the first try the overseas operator in New York said the White House said there was no one named Mac Bundy in the White House. But

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finally after a certain amount of static I did get through. I got Alice Boyce, Mac's secretary and learned from her in, you know, these guarded phrases that one uses, that Mac was in the situation room with the President, which meant to me that the President was on the telephone to somebody. I got Mac, and it was indeed the case the President was one the telephone to somebody. He was on the telephone to Macmillan. And what I later learned from Bundy but didn't learn at that moment, although I got the flavor of it, was that the British delegation had sent something back saying we were obstructing things, and what the hell was going on. So I was talking to Bundy and the President was talking to Macmillan. What he was getting from Macmillan was the

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static about, "Why don't you fellows get on with the negotiations?" I explained as best I could what the problem was to Bundy. Bundy talked to the President, and Bundy said, "Okay, you are free to resolve the problem as the delegation thinks best." Well, the result of the call was that we in fact did essentially conclude the negotiation with the kind of language which appeared with which this issue was ducked rather than met.

O'CONNOR: You mentioned that the British delegation had in effect reported that you were dragging your feet, you and Averell Harriman. What was your relationship with the British delegation from the start? As I understood it – let me add this – their instruction was to defer to the American delegation, and there was all this disagreement.

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KAYSEN: That was perfectly clear. We had lunch with Macmillan and the British delegation, their whole delegation, before we went out. It was mostly a social lunch but Harriman was taken off in a corner with Hailsham [Lord Quintin Hogg Hailsham] by Macmillan. And what Harriman told us he'd been told was that Hailsham was to listen to him. On the other hand Hailsham was a man on whom this didn't sit very easily, and he was erratic, a bit silly...

O'CONNOR: You mean in general, or during the negotiations?

KAYSEN: Oh, in general I think. I only knew him for this short period. I know Hailsham only from this experience so I'm not speaking generally. For example, when we had a formal delegation meeting of the two delegations in London within five minutes of the opening Hailsham had both made a fool of himself and

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insulted the American delegation. Hailsham had insulted the American delegation and made a fool of himself by waiving the proposed draft treaty which we were going to table, and saying, "This is absolutely incompetent. Who drafted it? It couldn't have been drafted by

anybody who knows anything. It doesn't make any sense." Now, the drafters of the treaty were chiefly Adrian Fisher, and to a lesser extent John McNaughton, who were sitting right there before him. They are both experienced lawyers. Adrian Fisher was the reporter on international law for the American Law Institute. John McNaughton, although not an international lawyer, was a law professor at Harvard. Hailsham, as far as I know, was a man of no great distinction as a lawyer. And then while he was saying these offensive things one of the foreign office fellows on

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the delegation was trying to whisper in his ear and point out to him that the U.K. had agreed to that draft.

O'CONNOR: You don't know who that was?

KAYSEN: I do, but I can't think of his name at the moment.

O'CONNOR: Was it Duncan Wilson [Archibald Duncan Wilson]?

KAYSEN: Yes, it probably was Duncan Wilson – had agreed to that draft and it was a joint draft. There was the morning in Moscow when we had a crucial meeting. We had a meeting of the few delegations at roughly noon every day to go over what had happened in the drafting committee, and so on. We alternated these meetings between the U.K. Embassy and the American. We had all trooped over there to the U.K. Embassy for a meeting. Hailsham was nowhere to be found. Trevelyan [Sir Humphrey Trevelyan], the Ambassador, seemed quite an able and was

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certainly quite a nice guy, was terribly embarrassed. And it seems that Hailsham had just gone off sightseeing and had gotten lost, or forgotten that there was a meeting.

O'CONNOR: Why would a man like that be appointed the head of a delegation? This was an important mission that was to be accomplished.

KAYSEN: Especially for Macmillan, but this is something you'll have to ask them. It was, you know, responsive to some internal political purpose of Macmillan's. I also think that Macmillan felt that the Americans would do the negotiating, and that he would be in the role that he did assume, of exercising some pressure if we chose.

Again, I can't report on the discussion that went on in Washington. I was in Moscow. But the kind of point that we were hung up

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on for is half day was a highly technical point of legal international protocol, not anything substantive. “Does signing this or that recognize East Germany?” and all this kind of stuff. In retrospect three years later, I don’t know whether it would have made all that difference if we’d waited until Monday, but I’m not sorry we did it. I think it was time.

O’CONNOR: I was surprised to hear you mention that as one of the outstanding difficulties. I was under the impression that in the actual negotiating of the treaty itself the major difficulties revolved around the withdrawal clause and the peaceful uses clause...

KAYSEN: The withdrawal clause. The peaceful uses clause we had to give up right away. The withdrawal clause was the most difficult one to

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phrase. But perhaps what I’m saying is this was the final difficulty, and I would say that it was the only point at which the sort of atmosphere of the negotiating room became tense and tough. Gromyko said to Harriman, “If you give me this note I will have to respond in a way that you will find unbearable.” Well, that’s pretty tough talk from a diplomat. Whereas the withdrawal clause it got to statements like, “Well, it’s improper to talk about divorce when you’re just about to celebrate a marriage,” and things of that sort which were, you know, on the mild side. So that in that sense.... And of course the tension over this point is consistent with, and if you like, bears out the proposition that it was in connection with relations with Communist China and the political relations with Communist parties all

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over the world that the Soviets were most interested in this thing. And they didn’t want to be put in the position of showing themselves as selling out to the “gangsters” and “pirates” – which were the words that were used – “cutthroat gangsters” and “pirates” of the Chiang Kai-Shek clique. So that one can see a little bit why they should be sensitive about this.

O’CONNOR: Do you think we really missed the boat on not pursuing – after the test ban was successfully negotiated – not pursuing this idea of reparational armcrafts in connection with the non-aggression pact further?

KAYSEN: Yes, but now you’re getting a view from me, not a view from John F. Kennedy.

O’CONNOR: Yes, but what I’d hoped was getting your

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impressions of what the feeling was on the test ban...

KAYSEN: Well, let me put it this way. Once the treaty was negotiated the President focused on the problem of getting it through the Senate. And you have to remember that once the treaty was negotiated my own connection became very thin. I took a month's vacation. I hadn't had any vacation through the whole thing. I took a month's vacation at the Cape. I talked on the phone to Bundy four or five times and to a few other people, but that's about all. And then I went back to Washington. My family was already back here. I went back to Washington, but, you know, we were involved in things. We were involved in a lot of talks about East-West trade; we were involved in the grain negotiations. There were things

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going forward. You know, I think the sort of "what Kennedy would have done if he lived" kind of speculations aren't history. They aren't anything else, and they are usually political propaganda. So I'm rather chary about them. There certainly was impulse and interest in this direction. Harriman thought – a thought which many people shared, and I was one of them – that a non-aggression treaty would have been a good idea and that we should have pursued it.

O'CONNOR: Do you know why it wasn't pursued?

KAYSEN: Well, I just think that the events, problems in Washington after the President's assassination were such that it was very hard to do. The President's [Lyndon B. Johnson] immediate problem was getting a grip on the rein of government. And it's clear that the Secretary of State was never very keen on a non-aggression pact, and most of the State Department was opposed to it, a

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large part of it, the EUR. And it was difficult for the new President to have the same relation with and the same capacity in dealing with a new area in which he himself was not knowledgeable. And then of course by a year later Vietnam and things related to Vietnam started to become dominant in foreign affairs.

O'CONNOR: Okay.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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