

George W. Anderson, Jr. Oral History Interview – 4/25/1967
Administrative Information

Creator: George W. Anderson, Jr.
Interviewer: Joseph E. O'Connor
Date of Interview: April 25, 1967
Place of Interview: Washington, D.C.
Length: 28 pages

Biographical Note

Anderson was an Admiral in the U.S. Navy, Chief of Naval Operations for the Joint Chiefs of Staff (1961-1963), and Ambassador to Portugal (1963-1966). In this interview, he discusses the Cuban Missile Crisis, the controversy over a government contract to make the TFK military airplane, conflicts between civilian and military personnel in the Defense Department, and Robert S. McNamara and John F. Kennedy's decision not to reappoint Anderson as Chief of Naval Operations, among other issues.

Access

Open.

Usage Restrictions

According to the deed of gift signed May 8, 1967, copyright of these materials passed to the United States Government upon the death of the interviewee. Users of these materials are advised to determine the copyright status of any document from which they wish to publish.

Copyright

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specified conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be "used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research." If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excesses of "fair use," that user may be liable for copyright infringement. This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law. The copyright law extends its protection to unpublished works from the moment of creation in a tangible form. Direct your questions concerning copyright to the reference staff.

Transcript of Oral History Interview

These electronic documents were created from transcripts available in the research room of 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. Page numbers are noted where they would have occurred at the bottoms of the pages of the original transcripts. If researchers have any

concerns about accuracy, they are encouraged to visit the library and consult the transcripts and the interview recordings.

Suggested Citation

George W. Anderson, Jr., recorded interview by Joseph E. O'Connor, April 25, 1967, (page number), John F. Kennedy Library Oral History Program.

Gift of Personal Statement

By George W. Anderson, Jr.

In accordance with the provisions of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949 as amended (63 Stat. 377) and regulations issued thereunder, I, Admiral George W. Anderson, Jr., U.S. Navy (retired), hereinafter referred to as the donor, hereby give, donate and convey to the United States of America for eventual deposit in the proposed John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library, and for administration therein by the authorities thereof, a tape and transcript of a personal statement approved by me and prepared for the purpose of deposit in the John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library. The gift of this material is made subject to the following terms and conditions:

1. Title to the material transferred hereunder will pass to the United States as of the date of the delivery of this material into the physical custody of the Archivist of the United States.
2. It is the donor's wish to make the material donated to the United States of America by the terms of the instrument available for research in the John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library. At the same time, it is his wish to

guard against the possibility of its contents being used to embarrass, damage, injure or harass anyone. Therefore, in pursuance of this objective, and in accordance with the provisions of Sec. 507 (f) (3) of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949, as amended, this material shall not during my lifetime plus two years be available for examination by anyone except persons who have received my express written authorization to examine it. This restriction shall apply to and include employees and officers of the General Service Administration, the National Archives and Records Service, and the John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library.

3. A revision of the above stipulation governing access to the aforesaid material may be entered into between the donor and the Archivist of the United States or his designee if it appears desirable to revise the conditions herein stipulated.
4. I hereby designate (a) Dr. David M. Abshire or (b) George W. Anderson III to have, after my death, the same authority with respect to authorizing access to the

aforesaid material as I have reserved to myself in paragraph 2 and paragraph 3 above.

5. The material donated to the United States pursuant to the foregoing shall be kept intact permanently in the John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library.
6. The donor retains to himself for his lifetime plus two years all literary property rights in the material donated to the United States of America by the terms of this instrument. After the expiration of this period, the aforesaid literary property rights will pass to the United States of America.

Signed

George W. Lindsey

Date

5 May 1967

Accepted

Acting

James B. Rhoads
Archivist of the United States

Date

May 8, 1967

George W. Anderson, Jr.

Table of Contents

<u>Page</u>	<u>Topic</u>
1	1961 Berlin crisis
2	1963 U.S. national budget
3	John F. Kennedy's (JFK) 1962 visit to the U.S. Atlantic Naval Fleet
4	Cuban Missile Crisis
7, 11, 21	TFX/F-111 military airplane controversy
8	1964 U.S. national budget
9	Football
10	Possibility of forming a multilateral nuclear naval force with NATO
12, 24	JFK's decision not to reappoint Anderson as Chief of Naval Operations
14	Anderson's 1963 speech at the National Press Club
15	Meeting with JFK before leaving to become Ambassador to Portugal
16	Conflicts between the civilian and military leadership at the Department of Defense
20	Naval Flag Plot incident with Anderson and Robert S. McNamara
25	Portuguese-U.S. relations

Oral History Interview

with

George W. Anderson, Jr.

April 25, 1967
Washington, D.C.

By Joseph E. O'Connor

For the John F. Kennedy Library

ANDERSON: This is the first interview of Admiral George W. Anderson, U.S. Navy, retired, formerly Chief of Naval Operations and member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and later the United States Ambassador to Portugal. I will confine my comments at this time to my personal relationships with President John F. Kennedy from the time that I was first notified that I was being appointed by him as Chief of Naval Operations.

In June of 1961, while I was on my flagship as Commander of the United States 6th Fleet in Sicily, I received information by message from Admiral Book Birch that I was being appointed by the President as the Chief of Naval Operations upon the retirement of Admiral Burke [Arleigh A. Burke] on the first of August, 1961. I was directed to proceed to Washington immediately to prepare for my new duties. On arrival in Washington on June 26th—check the date—I was invited to the White House reception given for President Ayub Khan [Mohammad Ayub Khan] of Pakistan. This was my first meeting with President and Mrs. Kennedy [Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy]. It was certainly an auspicious introduction because this was one of the finest receptions that I have ever seen anyplace in the world for a visiting dignitary, or chief of state. Certainly anyone who was present at this occasion, including the trip down the Potomac, the visit to Mount Vernon on the return, could not fail to be impressed with the style, the elegance, the propriety of this type of entertainment.

Shortly after taking office as Chief of Naval Operations on the first of August, I made my preliminary call on President Kennedy. It was an occasion of complete rapport, and I was

immediately impressed with the intelligence, the integrity, the great human qualities of the President.

My contacts with him were, of course, limited until late in the summer of 1961, when the Berlin crisis became a matter of major national and international consideration. During the Berlin crisis, I and my other colleagues of the Joint Chiefs of Staff met on several occasions with the President.

[-1 -]

During these meetings the President was extremely attentive, thoroughly aware of all the implications, and deeply appreciative of the necessity for the United States maintaining a strong, firm but just position.

Measures were taken to increase the readiness of United States Armed Forces during this crisis. Of particular note was the calling up of reserves of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps. From the naval point of view, we in the Navy did not feel that it was desirable to activate reserve ships, or call up to active duty reserve squadrons. However, the decision was made by higher authority and certainly fitted into the overall political posture of the United States at that time.

One of the interesting occasions when I had close association with the President was at the Army-Navy football game in 1961 when he came from the Army side of the field to the Navy side of the field. This was a close game. The President, throughout the half in which he sat next to me, was thoroughly interested, showed his complete awareness of all the technicalities of the game, and certainly manifested to me another facet of his extremely human qualities. Fortunately, the Army did not take care of all the opportunities that were given to them and the Navy won the game, and we had the pleasure of sharing Naval enthusiasm over this victory. In spite of the fact that the President was trying to be impartial, there was no question in my mind that he at that game did have a deep loyalty to the dark blue suits and the gold braid.

O'CONNOR: At least for the second half. [Laughter]

ANDERSON: I will discuss the second Army-Navy game of the following year a little bit later. [Laughter]

The Berlin crisis passed, and the entire government under the President's direction, the Defense Department under the Secretary of Defense's [Robert S. McNamara] direction, and the individual services were actively involved in the preparation of the budget for the fiscal year 1963. During the course of the preparations, each one of the military services naturally had many more requirements than could be met within the fiscal limitations that were obvious to all. It was quite apparent to each member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff that not everything that the services wanted could be obtained and still maintain a sound fiscal position, economic position of the United States.

However, I shared the same opinion as my colleagues in the Joint Chiefs of Staff that cuts were being made arbitrarily of items that were badly needed—not on the basis of inadequacy of funds because this was not the political position of the Secretary of Defense, but actually the cuts were being made on that basis. I felt very strongly that when cuts had to

be made—and we always knew that cuts had to be made in any military budget, or naval budget—that the service itself should be the one to make the judgment of the priorities of what should be given up, what could best be given up without most adversely hurting the service's capability to meet the requirements of today, tomorrow, and the day after tomorrow. This, of course,

[-2 -]

was not the position taken by the Secretary of Defense and his assistants in his own staff. They were the ones that were making the actual judgments of what we could have and could not have, and at the same time making a very strong position that cuts were not being made on the basis of limitation of funds.

Before the national budget was transmitted to the Congress, the President invited the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Secretary of Defense to visit him in Palm Beach. Here each one of the service Chiefs, I included, had the opportunity to réclame directly to the President and make our comments as to the adequacy of the budget. I prefaced my remarks by the statement that I realized that in peacetime there never were enough funds to go around to meet all requirements, and in wartime resources always constituted a limitation. The President listened to me attentively but, with due loyalty to the Secretary of Defense and with the understanding of the total limitations, did not make any changes in the budget as the Secretary of Defense presented it to him. And yet, there was no question on the part of any of us that we had had the opportunity to speak our piece, to state our views very forthrightly, and that the President did fully understand our positions.

During the spring of 1962, with the facility of the Naval Aide to the President, Captain Tazewell Shepard [Tazewell T. Shepard, Jr.], preparations were made for the President to visit the U.S. Atlantic Fleet. This would be his first opportunity to see our modern Navy in action. Naturally, from the standpoint of the Navy, this was an extremely significant visit. We wanted to make the best impression that we possibly could. (I do not have the exact date at hand at the moment as to this visit.) Naval operations are always extremely complicated, and particularly so when time is limited to put on a demonstration, when the time available for the President of the United States, in this case, is strictly specified and severely limited.

We had arranged for a rehearsal of the operations to make sure that all events were properly provided for, that the loose ends were tidied up, so to speak. The rehearsal was a very sad performance, partially handicapped by virtue of the weather. The prospect for the next day when the President was there was not too good. We made some very quick changes at the direction of the Chief of Naval Operations and certain key but junior members of his staff.

The President visited the fleet the following day, and the operations went off extremely well, marred, however, by the demonstrated inadequacy of certain of the guided missiles that were installed in the ships of the fleet. This was a problem which we in the Navy fully understood. I think that the President understood fully, but, of course, with the large press attendance on hand for a presidential visit, the poor performances of some of our newer missiles got greater play in the write-ups than did the good performance of the fleet as a whole, and especially so of the amphibious forces. Nevertheless, the President was an

extremely interested visitor to the fleet and profited greatly, I believe, from the opportunity to be aboard the new large carrier, *Enterprise*, visit a Polaris submarine to see the operations of the Marines conducting an amphibious landing on the coast of North Carolina. It

[-3-]

was a good show all around, but marred somewhat by the performance of the guided missiles.

During the late summer of 1962, it became apparent that there was a definite buildup of military strength in Cuba, aided and abetted by the Russians, by the Soviet Union. Much of the furor that evolved resulted from statements being made by Senator Keating [Kenneth B. Keating]. The attention of the Joint Chiefs of Staff had been on Cuba for a long time: first, during the Eisenhower Administration [Dwight D. Eisenhower] after it was clear that the new regime in Cuba under Castro [Fidel Castro] was definitely a Communist regime; secondly, during the unfortunate period of the operation termed the Bay of Pigs (which did not happen on my watch); and later as efforts were being made, studies being conducted in the United States government to find ways and means of getting rid of Castro and the Communists from Cuba.

I always felt, and some of my colleagues did, that as a result of the Bay of Pigs, the United States government would take timely action at an appropriate time, in one way or another, to get rid of Castro before the 1964 elections because certainly this was an incident which deeply affected President Kennedy. It was obvious in various conversations that the Joint Chiefs of Staff had had with him. And yet he wanted to do it in a way consistent with the high principles in the American character, so to speak.

Things were tolerable until it became apparent that there were offensive missiles with nuclear warheads being introduced into Cuba. At this time the government as a whole went to what we in the Navy would term general quarters. The matters were of great significance to the United States and the world; they were being considered as a matter of the greatest urgency, and under the greatest security considerations. The Joint Chiefs of Staff met, were almost in continuous session; the Chairman of the Joints Chiefs of Staff sat in with the executive group in the White House—then General Maxwell Taylor [Maxwell D. Taylor]—and then would come back and report to the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the deliberations at the highest level.

The position of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was that the United States government did indeed have to take prompt and forthright action, a) to eliminate the threat to the United States just ninety miles from home, and that this indeed did provide the ideal opportunity to get rid of the focus of infection of Communism in the Western Hemisphere. I might say that for many months there had been study groups considering every possible way of justifying an intervention of the United States into Cuba, even to the point of provoking the Cubans into some sort of action which would enable us to go in and clean up the mess. This was the problem that.... This was the incident that had been looked forward to, but when it actually occurred, the view at the highest levels definitely changed.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff had presented the different courses of action available to the United States from the military point of view, and full preparations were being made to take

any course of action that the President directed. It was fully understood by the Joint Chiefs of Staff that the

[-4-]

decisions in this case would be made by the President of the United States in consonance with the concept of civilian authority. However, the Chiefs did provide the best military advice that was available, the risks, and the requirements for each course of action.

I would presume that the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff did indeed present to the President and to the so called Executive Committee the detailed views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. However, I am not certain as to the effectiveness with which those views were actually presented to the President.

O'CONNOR: You don't mean that there wasn't sufficient opportunity to present them, but that they were not presented effectively. I'm not sure...

ANDERSON: That they were not presented effectively by the Secretary of Defense and by the Chairman, and, secondly, that time was running out, and that there were definite limitations. However, the President did take the opportunity to meet with the Joint Chiefs of Staff and devoted all the time that was necessary to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, hearing their views, prior to publication of the actual decision. We knew, of course, that the decision as to the course of action that had been adopted had already been made, but, nevertheless, the President did poll each one of us, listen to us attentively, and with understanding, and was aware of our individual views. These views were presented.

I don't believe that anyone of the members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, except General Maxwell Taylor, concurred in the course of action which had been decided upon. However, from my point of view, as Chief of Naval Operations, I realize that the course of action that had been adopted did not preclude further operations in extension or escalation in the light of developments.

I pointed out the risks to the President at this meeting: the fact that we could well become involved in a large-scale war at sea with certain hazards to the United States and allied shipping due to Russian submarines; that if the course of events did evolve in that way, it could result in a very serious challenge with very serious loss of life and shipping to the United States and the Western world; and that there could be escalation under unfavorable terms. It was my own opinion, which I still hold, that the better course of action would have been to confront the Cubans with a massive military intervention, which would have, a) succeeded in achieving the limited objective which was adopted—namely, getting rid of the so-called offensive missiles—but at the same time would have eliminated the Communist threat in the Western Hemisphere. After all, we had been looking for just such an opportunity.

I and my colleagues in the Joint Chiefs of Staff did not have the great apprehension that the Russians would get involved in a nuclear war over this situation. I think they all still hold to that view. At the conclusion of

this particular meeting, the President said, "Well, gentlemen, we have decided to do this. I appreciated your views." He turned to me, and he said, "Admiral, it looks to me like this is up to the Navy." I said, "Mr. President, the Navy will not let you down."

I went back to my office and found out that the Secretary of Defense had, probably at the direction of the President, placed me as the executive agent of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in charge of the quarantine features of the total operation, and that General LeMay [Curtis E. LeMay] had a similar responsibility relative to the continued air surveillance of Cuba and the missile sites.

Throughout this operation, it was my objective to see to it that the desires of the President were carried out efficiently, promptly, and effectively, and that the President, as the Commander in Chief, be fully kept informed of all of the developments. Best to meet these requirements and also in order that I could keep a tight reign on the overall operation, I established a watch in my own office where a watch composed of my three most senior and most experienced assistants. We had a direct line to the White House, to the Commander in Chief of the Atlantic Fleet, and to all sources of information and intelligence. As a matter of fact, John McCone [John A. McCone], the Director of CIA [Central Intelligence Agency], asked if he could have a man in my outer office, and that man was so installed. I was aware of the problems which had developed in earlier situations and was anxious to prevent high level interference from reaching down into the operating forces and, at the same time, to ensure that high level decisions were promptly and effectively carried out, and that the President, the Secretary of Defense, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, as a whole, be kept fully informed.

Naturally in this type of an operation there were certain problems. We learned many lessons. We corrected some deficiencies and mistakes as we went along, but I think that the operation as a whole was highly successful, extremely well handled, both by the operating forces, by the Commander in Chief, Atlantic Fleet—that is, Admiral Dennison [Robert L. Dennison]—and by my own staff and assistants in the Office of Naval Operations. Certainly, the President himself was extremely complimentary to me and to all of them after the crisis, so to speak, had passed.

As you know, at the end of the critical period, when the missiles were on their way out of Cuba and before the forces were demobilized, the President made a personal visit to the key installations. Members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff were invited to accompany him. And his presence in front of the troops and the personnel of the squadrons and of the ships was most impressive and certainly contributed to the high morale that permeated the whole establishment.

At the same time the Cuban Missile Crisis was going on, we had other problems concerned with Southeast Asia, Laos, the Chinese invasion of India. The Joint Chiefs of Staff were fully occupied in studying the military aspects of all of these matters. Normally, the communications and the views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff were given to the President by the Chairman,

Maxwell Taylor, or by the Secretary of Defense. These were important matters. It would have been better, in my opinion, if the Joint Chiefs of Staff themselves had had more opportunity to sit down and talk with the President. But, after all, the President of the United States, being chief of state and chief of government, is an extremely busy man, and I think we have to adopt the most expedient solutions under such circumstance. And I don't know anything better than the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff presenting the views of the Chiefs, provided, of course, that those views are honestly and completely set forward in a dispassionate and objective manner. At times I and other members of the Chiefs wondered whether the views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff actually were fully, objectively, and dispassionately presented to the President because, after all, our object was purely for the national security of the United States without coloring it in any way, shape, or form.

O'CONNOR: I can understand that you might have some question as to whether the views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff were adequately presented by the Secretary of Defense, but did you ever have any question as to whether the views were adequately presented by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, by Maxwell Taylor?

ANDERSON: Yes. Yes.

O'CONNOR: That's what I wanted to know.

ANDERSON: Yes, and all of his colleagues felt that way, too. There wasn't any question that, with the departure of General Lemnitzer [Lyman L. Lemnitzer] and the arrival of General Maxwell Taylor in the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the free exchange of views during the presence of the Chairman was considerably inhibited, and that there was not the same trust and faith in General Taylor as there was in his predecessors.

One of the events which took place during the missile crisis—or at least it came to a head at the time of the missile crisis—was the award of the contract which later became the very controversial project known as the TFX. This is a long story in itself. It is a matter of continuing interest and concern. This did not come by my personal knowledge, was not in my personal knowledge a matter in which the President was involved. Certainly not with either General LeMay or myself. I do suspect, however, that it had been a subject of at least passing discussion between the Secretary of Defense and the President. I can only speculate that the President told the Secretary of Defense that if you are awarding this contract this way, make sure that you can justify it.

As I say, this is a story in itself, and not one in which my relationships with the President were involved at that particular time. Suffice to summarize that the award of the particular contract was made to the less, least satisfactory plane at the more expensive airplane and without consultation with either General LeMay, myself, or our uniform technical personnel. This,

naturally, came as very much of a surprise to us that a recommendation that was made would be reversed a hundred and eighty degrees without interim consultation. However, there was no question that the decision made by the Secretary of Defense was within his legal authority, and both General LeMay and I accepted the decision. We didn't understand it. We didn't like it. But we were carrying out orders, and until the investigation came about when we were forced to make statements to the Senate investigating committee, it was a completely private matter with the best efforts of both services going towards making the best out of what we felt was the poorest choice.

I'll speak more on the TFX a little bit later.

The second item which occupied the Secretary of Defense, of course, and all of the service Chiefs during the Cuban Missile Crisis, during the crises involving India and China and Laos, was the preparation of the 1964 fiscal year budget. The situation was very much the same as it had been the year before. The Secretary of Defense made profound statements that there were no limitations of funds when actually all of us knew that we were operating under reasonable restrictions of funds, that the decisions were being made in the office of the Secretary of Defense by civilian analysts and budgeteers who were, in fact, encroaching upon the fundamental responsibilities of the Chiefs of Staff in their service capacities and of the service secretaries.

Once again, where the Navy budget did not include certain items which I felt were matters of graver importance—specifically inadequate procurement of aircraft, inadequate allowance for personnel to meet the requirements, a failure to provide for enough nuclear powered submarines—I made my proper réclame through channels to the Secretary of Defense. Again the President met with the Joint Chiefs of Staff at Palm Beach, and he asked each one of us our views, and again I presented those views forthrightly and straightforwardly to the President, stating, again, that I realized that there were not sufficient funds to go around, but that when cuts had to be made, I felt that we who had the responsibility for the effectiveness of our own service should be the ones who would finally make the decisions as to where the cuts would, in fact, be made. I said I made this statement with the full knowledge that the Secretary of Defense, who was present, did not agree with that concept.

I might say that I passed over one interesting association with the President. That was the Army-Navy game in 1962. This year the Navy was the host, and the President sat on the Navy side for the first half of the game. That year the Navy had a very outstanding quarterback, Roger Staubach, who was an All-American. He put on a superb performance, and before the game was half over, the score was heavily in favor of the Navy, and by that time, particularly Bobby Kennedy [Robert F. Kennedy] was showing great sympathy for the Army and also sympathy for General Maxwell Taylor, who had been sitting on the Navy side of the field. The President made the remark that he didn't think it was good.... No, Bobby Kennedy made the remark that he didn't think it was good to have the Navy licking the Army for so many years in a row. The President left the Navy side of the field and went across to the Army side for the second half, and during that time some drunken individual rushed out from

the sidelines and almost got to the President in spite of the attention of the Secret Service. It startled us all, and we were very thankful that nothing really came about at that time, but it did bring to our minds, which was recalled later, the vulnerability of the President when he does go out in public.

Shortly after that game, as a matter of fact on Monday morning, I wrote a rather light and amusing letter to the President commenting on Bobby Kennedy's sympathy for the Army, explaining to the President that I'd been on the losing side for four or five years in a row when the Navy wasn't enjoying such prosperous times, and bitterly resenting any possible suggestion that the Attorney General might make that Roger Staubach be transferred to the Army.

I was down in Palm Beach over New Year's 1962-63. On New Year's Eve the President telephoned me and said that he was going down to the Orange Bowl game in Miami the next day and asked if I would like to go. I told him that I would be delighted. He said get out to the golf course at such and such a time the following morning, and we'll ride down together. I was in the helicopter with him, with Senator Mike Mansfield and the President, just the three of us. The rear of the helicopter was filled with the usual entourage of Secret Service people. In the air, about halfway down, the President received word that Senator Kerr [Robert S. Kerr] had died. It was a very illuminating, interesting experience for me to watch the mind of the President work. First of all, there was the expression of intense sorrow; second, the quick arrangements directed by him in order that he could express his sympathy and then get to the funeral; and third, the discussion of who would take the place of Senator Kerr as Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee. The remarks of the President as to the adequacy and the competency of the next senior member of the majority party were not very complimentary to the individual, and the President and Senator Mansfield were thinking out loud and trying to devise ways and means that they could best get the steadying influence that they felt had been provided by Senator Kerr and they doubted would be provided by the next senior individual.

We were at the game. The President again was exposed. This, of course, was the time when there were many Cubans...

O'CONNOR: In Miami.

ANDERSON: ...in Miami. Naturally, the Secret Service were taking the normal precautions, but it certainly came to my mind later how vulnerable the President was again by such a public exposure.

During the spring of—the winter and early spring of 1963, the morale of uniformed people in the Pentagon was pretty poor. The impact of large numbers of very young, extremely intelligent, but very, very aggressive civilians operating under the direction of the Secretary of Defense, demanding studies on every conceivable subject, was causing a problem. Somehow or other the President probably got the news on this, perhaps through one of his military aides, I'm not aware of how. But, in any event, one day the Naval Aide came to my office, said the President thought that he might come over to the

Defense Department, as he had to several of the other departments, and talk to the senior people. The Naval Aide asked what subject I thought that the President should stress. I told him I thought that the most important thing that could be presented was a respect for the military, a respect for the man in uniform and the job that the military had to do in this complicated world in which we live. The Naval Aide thanked me. I didn't know any more about it for sometime.

At that time, I had been invited to go out on a "Meet the Press" program on a Sunday afternoon. I appeared, answered questions to the best of my ability. And the next morning I got a very nice note from President Kennedy, very short, but extremely complimentary and very warm, stating that he felt that I had done a great service to the country. I cite this just as a manifestation of the very high regard that I had for him, the high regard and respect that he had for anybody in uniform, particularly those in a position of responsibility. I felt that the Navy was giving the President the type of support that he wanted, and the President never hesitated in letting us know, a) when he was pleased with events, and, b) when he questioned something that was going on, in which case we tried to give him the best information we could.

There was a proposal that had been made for a so-called "multilateral nuclear force." The idea of this was that there would be large numbers of merchant ships which would be NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] owned, multilaterally manned, which would be cruising around the continent of Europe, around the periphery of the Soviet Union, and that this would be an answer to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and yet give our NATO allies a sense of participation.

This project had its origin at a low level in the Navy Department and a relatively high level in the State Department. It was picked up very aggressively by a group of crusaders, and the President finally embraced this project, but only as an idea, only as an idea to propose to our allies if they, themselves, wanted it, it was something we could offer them.

I don't believe that the President ever intended that we actually get embarked in this. But, rather, this was a proposition which the United States could table if the allies wanted it. He asked me about it. I told him that, of course, a) with the leadership of the United States Navy, given adequate financial, political, and technical support from our allies, of course, the United States Navy could do it.

However, I did not favor this as the solution to the NATO problem. I said that it would be far better, if we were to get into this type of a thing, that we actually have Polaris submarines, but that there were very many impediments to having a submarine project of this sort at that particular time: first, the opposition of the Congress of the United States, who did not want any part of any other nationality, friendly or not, to be involved in our nuclear powered submarines; secondly, that the Polaris in the submarine would further complicate the implementation of the project, and

[-10-]

second, the expense would be much greater.

The President sent me and General Maxwell Taylor a very short note which was prefaced by the phrase, "Assuming that there is no political alternative, I desire that you support the project." I wrote back to the President, using his same phrase, "Assuming that

there is no political alternative, I wish to make it known that the U.S. Navy can put this project across, provided that there is full financial, political, and technical support from our allies.”

Later the Joint Chiefs of Staff were asked their opinion as to the feasibility of this, and they used the same term that the President had used “assuming that there was no alternative.” But again the President was very insistent in his directives to all the departments that we were not to go out and try to sell this project. If the other partners wanted it and if they were able to pay, wanted to pay their share of it, that this was something that we could do. No misunderstanding on the part of the President, but considerable misunderstanding on the part of the crusading group who were trying to sell this project.

At the end of April 1963, President Kennedy did come over to the Pentagon to talk to the senior military and civilian members of the Department of Defense and the three military services. He gave a very fine talk on the subject of the military, respect due to the military, and the role of the military. In fact, if I had sat down to write the text of this talk, I couldn't have done better. He did this off the cuff and on his own. I don't think that this was the type of a talk that some of the civilian side of the Pentagon had expected, but the President went over loud and clear and extremely well.

The Navy League was getting ready for its annual meeting in Puerto Rico, and a resolution had been framed by the directors of the Navy League severely criticizing the Secretary of Defense. With the President's talk, my strong feeling that, with the world in the critical state that it was in, this was no time for anybody coming out with a public resolution against the government. By my personal intervention with the directors of the Navy League, I was able to kill this resolution. I told them that I was doing it, that the President had been over and talked to the people in the Department of Defense, that this, in my opinion, was an ill-timed and unwise move from the standpoint either of the United States Navy or the United States. They accepted my recommendation.

However, also at this time, I had just been called up by the McClellan Committee to talk and give my testimony on the TFX. That is a long story in itself, but suffice to say that my testimony was under oath; I gave it as forthrightly as I could; I pulled no punches although I think that what testimony I gave was constructive and has since been borne out by developments. Nevertheless this testimony infuriated certain people in the civilian side of the Department of Defense. Efforts were made, and I knew the efforts were being made, to discredit any of the witnesses who testified against the

[-11-]

position taken by the Secretary of Defense. I had told and instructed my people that if they were called upon to testify on the subject of the TFX, they would testify as to facts under their own competence, tell the truth, avoid speculation, and that if they did this, I would back them one hundred per cent. I so told the Secretary of the Navy. No doubt my testimony and that of the other Naval officers and Air Force officers who went up was in very serious controversy with the public position taken by the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of the Air Force and the Secretary of the Navy, who were parties to the decision.

I went down to the meeting of the Navy League in San Juan, and while I was down there, I found out, purely by happenstance, that while I was away, Admiral McDonald

[David L. McDonald] was being brought back from Europe, and being brought back, told to come back and not let me, the Chief of Naval Operations, know that he was coming back, and that I was to be informed a couple of days later that I was not to be reappointed. I knew all this in advance by perfectly open sources; the loyalty of different people and the mistakes being made by certain amateurs trying to act in a slightly covert way was amusing in some respects. I told the President this afterwards, and he was very amused.

I was told that the Secretary of the Navy and the Deputy Secretary of Defense were going to call on me at home on Sunday afternoon. They did. I had arranged to have my Vice Chief of Naval Operations there with me, which startled them both, but nevertheless they told me that the President had decided that he did not desire to reappoint me as Chief of Naval Operations. I told them that I fully understood this, and we had a long discussion. The Deputy Secretary of Defense said that the President thought very highly of me and desired to appoint me as Ambassador to Portugal, and that the President asked Mr. Gilpatric [Roswell L. Gilpatric] to tell me that he really hoped that I would take the appointment. I told Mr. Gilpatric and the Secretary of the Navy that I appreciated the views of the President and that I would think this situation over; I would like the opportunity to speak to the President; that if the announcement was being made, I hoped that the announcement would be made quickly. My relationships with Secretary Gilpatric had always been extremely cordial, and he told me that he thought my requests were very reasonable, he would let me know. The next day he called me up and said that they would make the announcement promptly, and that after the announcement had been made, I would have the opportunity of seeing the President.

Many of my friends suggested that I cut in and call up the President. I did not feel that this was a matter that I should put the President in an embarrassing position, although I knew the whole story. It had been reported to me, and I think very reliably so, by a very close associate who was a very close associate of the President that this was a question that either Secretary McNamara said I had to go or he would go, and naturally under those circumstances the President made the decision.

O'CONNOR: Can you tell me who it was that reported this to you?

[-12-]

ANDERSON: No, no. Not at this time.

O'CONNOR: I see.

ANDERSON: I did not say anything at that time that the announcement that I was retiring was not legally within the power of anyone, even the President. But, on the other hand, if the President of the United States makes a statement to those of us in uniform, we're brought up to observe it. A lot of people tried to tell me not to, just don't retire, but the announcement was made, and I had my appointment with the President. I had a very, very frank interview with him; I told him the whole story of the situation, the problems which had developed; I told him that I had felt that with his coming over to the Pentagon, there was an opportunity to get on forward with work and that there perhaps could be less of a friction, irritation on both sides that had prevailed

before. And he again reiterated his desire that I take the position as Ambassador to Portugal. He expressed great personal admiration for my services, and I told him that I would let him know as quickly as I could. Later that afternoon I called him and told him that I would be very honored to take the position as Ambassador to Portugal.

I told him that I did not intend to write any book or make any public statement on this, but I reserved the position to do this in the light of how things might go. The President was extremely understanding of this whole situation.

He later, during that spring, decided that he would visit the Pacific fleet, which he did—I think it was in the month of June. The Pacific fleet put on an absolutely superb performance for the President very similar to the arrangements of the type done by the Atlantic fleet, but it was done far more efficiently and with greater impact. The President greatly appreciated this. That particular visit was hampered a little bit, however, by the fact that Sam Rayburn [Samuel Taliaferro Rayburn] had died. The President had to cut short the trip a little bit.

During the June and July of 1963, the subject of the Test Ban Treaty was one of great importance. This was a major objective of President Kennedy, and throughout all the discussion and the efforts to achieve a test ban treaty, the matter had come up under very serious and detailed consideration on many occasions, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff had given many position papers on it. The position papers, basically, of the Chiefs were that a treaty entered into without adequate safeguards was not in the interest of United States security and, therefore, could not have the support of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

I think that the President recognized the objections of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Certainly he listened extremely attentively to every facet of the position as it was presented. Nevertheless, he was publicly committed to this; the nation was committed to it; but he did recognize the hazard of entering into an unlimited test ban treaty if there was such serious opposition, and particularly the opposition of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and certain very senior people in the government. Therefore, they worked out the limited test ban treaty. Each one of the Chiefs had been called individually up before

[-13-]

Senator Stennis' [John C. Stennis] committee, I believe, to testify on the Test Ban Treaty. My testimony was given on that treaty while I was still in office. The unlimited test ban treaty.

I was replaced by Admiral McDonald on the first of August. Just before that, the President had a very lovely ceremony in the Rose Garden of the White House at which he presented me with a Gold Star in lieu of a second Distinguished Service Medal for my service as Chief of Naval Operations. The citation is interesting to me because, while it's a beautiful citation, it had absolutely no mention of the Cuban Missile Crisis in it whatsoever. The President's remarks were very carefully made. He had the entire Cabinet, all the principal figures in the government, and all of my friends there. He told how satisfactory my service had been to the White House. He emphasized the White House.

And then, much later, when I was over in Portugal, I got a very beautiful colored movie in sound of the ceremony with the remarks the President made.

Just before I left, I had a very short meeting with the President. I told him that I had been invited to go to the National Press Club to talk, as had Admiral Burke, after my retirement. I told him that I hadn't made up my mind whether I would accept or not, but that if I did, I would try to put my views across on a high level. The President with a smile said, "Well, no matter how high you try to keep it, they'll bring you down to a low level."

I went away after I retired from the Navy, went up to Cape Cod, was up there on vacation, and got a call back to testify before, I guess again it was the Senate committee on the limited test ban treaty. I prepared my own testimony on that and gave it to the committee.

I supported the treaty, provided there were certain safeguards put forth. Basically, the prestige of the United States had been committed, and, secondly, the President of the United States had stated in each particular that provision would be made for all the safeguards that had been considered necessary by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

I came back from my vacation and had accepted a speaking engagement with the National Press Club. I prepared my text. The meeting was scheduled for the fourth of September. I was due to be sworn in as ambassador on the third of September. Before going up, I sent a copy of my text to the President. I'd also told the Secretary of State [Dean Rusk] that perhaps he might not want to swear me in on the third of September because I was making a statement which could be considered very controversial and critical on the fourth. Secretary Rusk said, "Well, does it involve foreign policy?" I said, "No." He said, "Well, I'll just leave that up to you." And I went ahead and was sworn in. Unfortunately, the test...

[END SIDE 1, TAPE 1; BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 1]

O'CONNOR: You were talking about your speech to the National Press Club.

[-14-]

ANDERSON: Yes. I had sent a copy of my text to the President several days before. Unfortunately, due to problems within the White House and the preoccupation of the President with other activities, the copy was not delivered to the President until I was just going into the room in which I was to speak. The Naval Aide called me and said that the President read my speech; he was very concerned over certain aspects in it; and could I refrain from distributing copies of it? I said, no, it was too late; I was very sorry; and I was going to give my talk exactly as had been written in the test. Which I did. The speech did receive considerable notoriety—you can get a copy of it—and many people wondered whether I would still go on as Ambassador to Portugal having made such a, let's call it a frank and forthright statement with regard to the Department of Defense. I know that efforts were made in certain directions to try to have the appointment rescinded, but the President didn't react in that way at all.

I met with the President and had a long conversation with him about the 14th of September just before I left for Portugal. The President was extremely articulate. We talked primarily on the situation pertaining to Portugal and Portuguese-American relationships. He said that he felt that a person with a maritime background might have some impact on the Portuguese. He was not optimistic, but at least it was worth a good try. He outlined his objectives; he outlined his high respect for the Portuguese people, his respect for the

leadership given by Doctor Salazar [António de Oliveira Salazar], in spite of the fact that it wasn't on Jeffersonian democratic principles; he emphasized the great importance of the United States' holding onto the Azores base in the Atlantic and told me that when I went over there, I had to keep in mind the great importance of the Azores to the United States. He told me that I should not have any hesitancy at anytime of communicating with him.

I told him my own concern over the African situation as it pertained to Portuguese Africa and said that after I had gotten my feet on the ground over there, I would like the President's permission, with that of the Secretary of State, to go down and actually visit the territories in Portuguese Africa. The President said without hesitation, he thought that was an excellent idea, that we had not had sufficient on scene reporting in areas of such critical importance, and particularly in the underdeveloped areas of the world. It was an extremely amicable meeting, again, as always, I was tremendously impressed with the great intelligence, the human qualities of the President, coupled with his wit and humor.

As I got up to leave, I said, "Mr. President, just before I go, I want to tell you that sometime long after you are out of office and I am out of office, I will tell you exactly why I gave that talk at the National Press Club in the way I did." He put his arm on my shoulder and said, "Admiral, I think I understand."

O'CONNOR: That was the only remark he made to you about that speech?

ANDERSON: That was the only thing, yes. Oh, he did say, "Oh, there were some things in it I thought might better not be said at the time,

[-15-]

but I fully understand."

That was the last time that I saw President Kennedy. I arrived in Portugal, presented my credentials, and shortly thereafter we received the shocking news of the President's assassination. As his representative and the Ambassador, it was up to me to arrange for memorial services. I can say that in the case of every other country around the world, the shock of the President's death was tremendous, the emotion very deep and sincere. The response, the attendance at the memorial service was truly inspirational. Every senior official of the Portuguese government, from Prime Minister Salazar down, was in attendance. Portuguese protocol did not permit the President of Portugal [Americo Thomaz] to be present at the ceremony, but Dr. Salazar was there, and the President was represented. I think that the Portuguese people and the Portuguese government fully understood what a great man President Kennedy was even though they had very sincere differences of opinion on political matters.

There were very many other incidents during my time as Chief of Naval Operations which come to mind which might be talked about. One was, for example, the loss of the submarine *Thresher* in which the President was intensely interested because it involved the loss of a large number of Navy men, and secondly, it involved the first loss of a nuclear powered submarine.

Other events in connection with international affairs may come to mind at a later date, but I think that, at this point, this is as far as I would like to go, certainly so without the benefit of any documents or notes for the purpose of a reference. Do you have any questions?

[Interruption]

ANDERSON: (Subject: My relationships within the Department of Defense.)
I had served in Washington in the Department of the Navy during World War II, particularly in the early part of World War II to the end of World War II. I had been back in the Navy Department in the Chief of Naval Operations' office for duty on several occasions. I had served in the unique position as Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and I'd been to the National War College. And I feel that I was fully aware of the concept of civilian control of the military, a concept to which I heartily subscribe. I had been instrumental in writing many of the details of the National Security Act of 1947, particularly those safeguarding Naval aviation in the Marine Corps. So that there's no question that I am representing the vast majority. The vast majority of military people are fully aware of the importance of civilian control of the military. It is fundamental to the concept of the United States.

I have found that over the years the officials who have been appointed to high positions in the government in the Defense Department have been people of great ability and integrity who, even if they didn't arrive with a full understanding and appreciation of the people in uniform, certainly had that appreciation when they left. My relationships with the civilians who had

[-16-]

occupied positions of great importance, both in the Department of Defense and in the Navy Department, had been entirely proper and very, very cordial.

I had the utmost of respect for John Connally [John B. Connally, Jr.], the Secretary of the Navy who appointed me. My relationships with him were absolutely superb; they couldn't have been better; we had a full, frank, and complete exchange of information on every subject; I kept him fully informed on every detail that went on within the office of the Chief of Naval Operations and within the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Secretary Connally telephoned me when he made his decision that he would leave the Navy Department, and he told me that he was being replaced by a fellow Texan, Fred Korth.

With Secretary Korth my relationships had been extremely cordial, extremely cordial. However, Korth was an entirely different type of man than Connally. Korth did not study his lesson, his professional lesson, as did Connally. And, furthermore, when Korth went down to see the Secretary of Defense on any important matter, he didn't take the Chief of Naval Operations with him, as did Mr. Connally. It's an awful lot to have a civilian who comes into a position absorb everything. It's always better if he has somebody else along who can help him out, even if he does study his lesson very thoroughly. But Mr. Korth was active in many ways. He wanted to be liked by everybody, and he had many outside interests. He was making many trips down to Texas. I thought Mr. Korth was probably going down to attend to personal business in his bank, but I didn't know. But he took the Chief of Naval Operations

jet and used to go back and forth. Unfortunately while Connally had tremendous ability and would stand up to the very strong minded Secretary of Defense—Secretary McNamara is an extremely brilliant man—Mr. Korth couldn't: a) he didn't have the strength of character, and, b) he didn't have the intellectual capability of coping with Secretary McNamara. Furthermore, I always had the distinct impression, backed up by knowledge on certain events, that Korth would say one thing to the Secretary of Defense and another thing to the Chief of Naval Operations or to other people in the Navy. This was not the case with John Connally. You knew that he said the same thing; he shot straight all the way across the board.

Now I don't believe that Korth was trying to be deceitful. I think that he was just trying to be liked by everybody. I don't think that this was in a malicious way, although he had a furious temper, and he was having domestic problems, marital affairs, which I didn't know about at the time, which in retrospect I can see could have disturbed him and caused considerable irritation to him.

We in the Navy always felt that Connally was backing us up, and I and others realized that Korth only backed us up to a limited degree. We did not feel that Korth had the same loyalty down, as John Connally did. In the Navy we suffered from the inadequacy of the Under Secretary of the Navy, Paul Fay [Paul B. Fay, Jr.]...

O'CONNOR: I was going to ask you about that.

[-17-]

ANDERSON: ...who was a very likable chap, appointed by President Kennedy, because President Kennedy liked him and wanted him around, but I don't believe President Kennedy had any illusions as to the ability and competency of Paul Fay. For example, during the Cuban Missile Crisis Paul Fay, the Under Secretary of the Navy, didn't even know there was a crisis on. This is perhaps a tribute to the security in which the whole problem was handled, or could be taken as indictment of the fact that Paul Fay was interested in physical fitness or something of that sort.

We also suffered from the fact that during all this critical period, we didn't have an Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Financial Management. For a long period, the post was vacant; secondly, when Victor Longstreet [Victor Mendell Longstreet] came in and was appointed, no sooner did he come in to report for duty, even before he reported for duty, he had a detached retina and was hospitalized. These were very serious deficiencies, particularly so when you didn't have an effective Chief of Staff or executive in the Secretarial side of the house.

I was greeted by Secretary McNamara with great respect. He was extremely affable. I was immediately impressed with his tremendous intellectual brilliance, his dedication; certainly nobody works harder. He was working in accordance with his own interpretation as he saw best for the United States. Again, he is intellectually brash, and he's intellectually arrogant. He was gravely shaken, I'm sure, by the events of the Bay of Pigs right after he came in, which perhaps added to his distrust for some of the people in uniform. He was not aware of the degree to which, or I don't believe he was aware of the degree to which, his people were irritating those senior people in the military—not only senior people, but lower level people.

In the fall of 1961, after I'd been there about four or five months observing the situation which was developing—I think it was the fall, it might have been the spring of 1962—but in any event, I raised with the Joint Chiefs of Staff the matters which were irritating to the Joint Chiefs of Staff and suggested to General Lemnitzer, who was still the Chairman, that we ought to meet in executive session with the Secretary of Defense, talk these things out, and perhaps get a better ambience or atmosphere in which to carry on the work with which we were definitely involved, for the good of the country and the good of the services and the harmony in the whole establishment. The other Chiefs thought this was a good idea, and we met.

I had three specific items as my part of the agenda. I remember them very well. One was the fact that there was a former German, who worked for the German Air Force during the war, who was in the budget section of the Department of Defense, who was assigned to the problems of Naval aviation, and, in fact, was usurping the prerogatives of the Chief of Naval Operations, and irritating all the people who were working on this—captains and commanders, and rear admirals in some cases—usurping the functions of the Chief of Naval Operations in determining requirements. And this individual, by the name of Dieter Schwebs, could not pass a Naval security clearance. I said to the Secretary of Defense, “This is not good. And, furthermore, we don't believe it's a good security risk. But the main point I want to make is that

[-18-]

the manner in which he is conducting these studies with typical Germanic so-called efficiency is very irritating to a very hard pressed and overworked people in responsible positions.”

I said, “The second case in point is that of Arthur Sylvester, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Relations of the Defense Department, who is very outspoken about the military and is not trusted by the military.” It happened, I didn't bring this up at the time, I happened to have a signed statement Arthur Sylvester had made to various individuals saying how he had put Admiral Burke in his place, and he was going to do the same thing to Admiral Anderson; and, furthermore, he was going to eliminate this business of the Navy's approach to public relations by their civilian orientation cruises. This was made in Honolulu. I had a signed statement, but I didn't bring that specific case up at that time.

And I said, “The third thing that I want to bring up to you, Mr. Secretary, is a statement that was made by one of your trusted assistants at a dinner party the other night when a request was made to him what did he do in the Department of Defense, and he made the statement that he made or broke flag and general officers.” The Secretary said, “Give me his name, and he will be out of here in twenty-four hours.” I gave him his name, and Mr. McNamara was shocked because the name was Adam Yarmolinsky. Well, this was just part of the general discussion.

Mr. McNamara went up from that meeting and made a fundamental mistake. He called these people all in or passed the word out to the civilian side of the house that here the Chief of Naval Operations had indicted them by name and specifics which was not the way to handle the situation at all. But relationships with the Secretary of Defense I would say were, personally, very good up to the point that he made the decision on the TFX and came

under fire for it. He made the statement at the time this was the greatest crisis of his career, that he must be proven right regardless of what happened. We knew this, LeMay and I. It was immediately reported to us that the witnesses must be discredited in order that he be proven right.

And I think that the breakdown in communications on critical issues is due, you might say, to his unusual brilliance, with a sense of infallibility, and perhaps, beyond that, a mind which rejects statements that are contrary to his view unless he wants to accept them. But he's really a man of tremendous accomplishments, but, as every human being, he has his weaknesses. And I would say that had John Connally continued on as Secretary of the Navy, there would have been a far better relationship between the Naval service and the Secretary of Defense than was possible with Secretary Korth because as time goes on the people in the service get to know or at least to have an impression of their higher civilian authorities—the impression may be wrong, but at least they get it pretty quickly—and there was an entirely unsatisfactory situation while Korth was Secretary of the Navy. And I think that this was part of the trouble because, as you may recall, shortly after I left, Korth also left as a result of the conflict of interest.

[-19-]

O'CONNOR: You had a specific, and what has become a well publicized difference with the Secretary of Defense at the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis in the Navy Flag Plot. Do you recall that?

ANDERSON: Yes.

O'CONNOR: Well, what I wanted to ask you was about that, really, was, that led me to believe that there were very serious conflicts between you and the Secretary before that time, and I wondered whether that was a correct assumption or not.

ANDERSON: Conflicts? No. At least not conflicts that I considered. There were differences of opinion on matters of what should be in the budget or how something should be determined. We had had differences—differences, for example, in whether or not to call up the Reserves during the Berlin missile crisis—but everything in a perfectly harmonious satisfactory way.

Now the so-called “incident,” in Flag Plot, as far as I was concerned, wasn't any incident at all, not even of sufficient importance for me to write down in my diary. It didn't come to a head until after a decision was made not to reappoint me, and came to a head there primarily because the decision was being justified not on my testimony on the TFX to the Congress, but on the basis that I didn't handle the Navy in the Missile Crisis well, or couldn't manage the Navy well.

Now, what was the incident in Flag Plot? The so-called incident in Flag Plot occurred when Secretary McNamara and Secretary Gilpatric, accompanied by certain members of the public information staff of the Department of Defense, came down to Flag Plot to see the actual deployment of the ships. The question was proposed about the location of a specific

destroyer which seemed to be out of line, the rest of the destroyers on the quarantine line. The Secretary of Defense started asking questions on this.

Now why that ship was there was that he was sitting on top of a Russian submarine. We knew this because we obtained it from the most highly classified source of intelligence that we have, extremely tightly held, for which there were other people in the room, including those from the office of the Secretary of Defense, Public Affairs, plus some of my Naval officers who were not cleared to know this information. I tried to divert the Secretary from this subject, but he's very tenacious, and he was very persistent. (And after all, we were all pretty tired out during this whole time.) So I said, "Mr. Secretary, I suggest we go in the other room." The other room being a very super-secret compartment of Flag Plot, and we excluded the people from Public Affairs and also all other people who were in the room while he was questioning me. We went in there. I explained to the Secretary what the situation was. He thoroughly understood it, and apparently, as we were going back, I guess I made some remark, "Well, Mr. Secretary, you go on back, and we'll take care of this blockade," or something. But it was a light vein of good humor. And I never heard any more about this so-called incident

[-20-]

until, as I say, after the decision was made not to reappoint me. Elie Abel asked me this question.

O'CONNOR: Yes, I figured he must have.

ANDERSON: And I told Elie, I said, "Now, this is the background, but all I want you to put in your book is that Admiral Anderson's recollection is not in accordance with the foregoing." Which he did, which was the statement apparently by Gilpatric, or McNamara, or somebody, but that.... So as far as I was concerned, there was no incident in Flag Plot of any transcending importance or continuing interest until it was brought up by somebody else, and in an exaggerated and distorted form, because those people who brought it out had no knowledge of what the specific problem was.

O'CONNOR: Then this was brought up again as a reason for not reappointing you?

ANDERSON: That was brought up not by Mr. McNamara, but by some of the people in his Public Affairs section.

O'CONNOR: That's an incredible story. That's very, very strange. Well, did you find the same, in a sense, lack of understanding—I'm not sure if I'm using the correct term, but you can correct me on that—with Under Secretary Gilpatric, as you did with....

ANDERSON: Under Secretary Gilpatric is an entirely different type of individual than Bob McNamara. Roz Gilpatric is very suave, he had been around

government a long time, and he's a lawyer interested in working out conciliatory arrangements, where McNamara sort of looked upon people as, well, as salesmen or agency heads, or something of that sort—an entirely different approach. I got along very well, as I say, I got along very well because Gilpatric was much easier to talk to. I could.... Also, he wasn't the top dog there in the Secretary of Defense's office.

I remember during the time of the TFX thing, Mr. Gilpatric asked me to come down and talk to him. I talked very frankly to him. I told him that Mr. Korth felt this way; I said there was nothing that I could ever say that would change Mr. Korth's opinion on certain matters. I think Gilpatric had a broader understanding of things, certainly in regard to relationships with people.

O'CONNOR: Well, at the time of the TFX you didn't have much conflict then with Gilpatric? At the time of the TFX investigations there wasn't—for example...

ANDERSON: Oh, investigations?

O'CONNOR: Yes. McClellan [John L. McClellan] investigations.

ANDERSON: I, personally?

[-21-]

O'CONNOR: Yes.

ANDERSON: No, I didn't have any conflict with McNamara, at all. I was not having anything to do directly with McNamara. The Secretary of the Navy was handling things. They tried to tell me what I would put in my statement, and I said I wouldn't put anything—I didn't intend to make a statement....

O'CONNOR: Who tried to tell you that? You mean Secretary Korth did?

ANDERSON: Secretary Korth on behalf of the so-called task group of the Department of Defense, and later my Vice Chief of Naval Operations went to Secretary Korth and told him that, he said, "Mr. Secretary, (This was Claude Ricketts [Claude Vernon Ricketts].) you don't realize what you're getting into. If Anderson incorporates in the statement the things you wanted to put into his statement, and he goes up there and testifies under oath, the first question he'll be asked is, 'Admiral, were you put under any influence in making your statement?' And he'll tell the truth and say, 'Yes.' And then you'll have an entirely different investigation on your hand." Whereupon I was informed by Mr. Korth that there was no requirement for anything specific to put in the statement, but they wanted me to turn in the statement before I went up there.

I said, "Mr. Secretary, I have no objection to you and Mr. McNamara seeing my statement before I testify, but I'm damned if I'm going to pass it down to let these Defense Department lawyers pick it up to be used as if it was a criminal case up there." I said, "This

isn't any conflict between military and civilian authority at all. We are being called upon as witnesses under oath before a Senate committee, and that's it."

There were certain facets of this, as I say. I knew, I was kept informed on this, as I would on anything else, in a very thorough and meticulous manner because I knew that the object of the exercise was not to get the right answer, but to prove Secretary McNamara right on the one side. Whereas the position of the committee under Senator McClellan was to find out the true story. Now his staff knew pretty much what the story was, but I would say that the senators themselves were fairly objective in this until they got to the point in this where, in testimony given by some of the Defense Department witnesses, there was certainly a breakdown of rapport between the Defense Department and Senator McClellan and his committee. I knew how close certain witnesses had come to committing perjury, right up to the borderline.

I knew, at least I suspected, the degree of the conflict of interest that was involved. I knew, for example, that Gilpatric had been the legal counsel for General Dynamics. I knew that Korth in his bank had had relationships with General Dynamics. I had previously in this case offered to call Korth to completely disassociate myself from any decision because I had had a rather harmonious relationship over a long period of years, a) with the Grumman Company which was a partner to General Dynamics, and, b) that my best man was a Boeing employee at one time. And Korth said, "Oh, no. I trust you completely." But, as I say, Gilpatric was an entirely different type of an

[-22-]

individual, and they were very complimentary, Gilpatric and McNamara, in the job.

O'CONNOR: Well, one of the points that Secretary Korth brought out in his testimony was that at one time statements had been made by the military that there was really no difference between the two planes, or at least that both planes were satisfactory, both the Boeing plane and the General Dynamics plane. What did you think of that? What was your interpretation of that statement?

ANDERSON: Well, I've always anticipated being recalled back to the McClellan Committee to answer that question, and the answer that I was prepared and am prepared to give to the McClellan Committee is that the only interpretation I can place on such a statement by the Secretary of the Navy was that perhaps the Secretary of the Navy was somewhat hard of hearing, which he was.

O'CONNOR: Was there any...

ANDERSON: There was a specific case, because I've gone over this very, very much in my own mind as to how he could justify that statement.... There was a statement made that.... First of all, the wording that was sent up—the recommendation for the Boeing aircraft was not worded as explicitly as it should have been. But remember that we were all busy with the Missile Crisis and the budget and so forth. And this was being handled in the greatest security, in other words, to prevent the thing

from leaking that one company was recommended against the other. So, a) the wording of the document was inadequate, in my opinion. It was at the time when I looked at it, and it was far more in review, because while the recommendation was clear for Boeing, well, it sort of hedged, well, this thing is now acceptable, or they're both acceptable. So that was one factor.

The other factor, in thinking the thing over, where Mr. Korth might have interpreted the so-called satisfaction that we had was when the announcement was made that the award was going to the General Dynamics-Grumman team versus the Boeing proposal, I made a remark, "Well, thank God for Grumman!" This, apparently, was interpreted as my satisfaction that the award was going to Grumman, because on its own General Dynamics couldn't have hacked the deal well, certainly from the Navy point of view.

Now the other thing where he might have interpreted that there wasn't any real difference between them was in a discussion which we had, and it was a rather interesting discussion, of the relative merits in awarding a contract—this was in the abstract—to one contractor versus two. Here was Boeing which, on the one hand, had had no recent experience in building Naval, carrier aircraft, but a single contractor—and we all agreed that that's normally the best way to handle it (two cooks spoil the broth)—versus two, the combination of General Dynamics, which had a pretty poor record of performance, but coupled and teamed up with Grumman, which had a good record of performance, certainly for the Navy aircraft. So the net result of that

[-23-]

was, well, one contractor or the other, six of one and a half dozen of another. But this was the question in the context we looked at it, and the other military were there at the same time, all Navy, not the Air Force—well, six of one, half dozen of another of Boeing versus the combination, but purely as a single contractor versus two in partnership.

Again, this was subject to considerable misinterpretation because one day I was talking to Mr. McNamara on the telephone, and they were getting all sorts of technical data—this was during the course of the hearing—and a lot of it was not very good data being presented by the Department of Defense, and I said to him, "Mr. Secretary, you know, we've got an awful lot of talent in the Bureau of Aeronautics who can give technical answers to many of these problems. I want you to know that any of this information that is available from the Navy Department is available to the Department of Defense." Mr. McNamara said, "Well, thank you very much George." He says, "This...." Oh, no. He says, "Thank you very much George." I said, "Now, you know, Mr. Secretary, this thing should never have happened." My statement, "this should never have happened," was predicated on my feeling that if there had been proper communication and discussion you never would have gotten into this thing. McNamara came back and said, "Of course, it shouldn't. It's just Scoop Jackson [Henry M. Jackson] up there trying to make a case for his constituents." No thought that there might be something wrong in our own house, but the trouble was outside. I cite this just as an example.

O'CONNOR: Who was it that was really responsible for the fact that you weren't reappointed?

ANDERSON: Mr. McNamara.

O'CONNOR: I wondered if the decision had essentially come from him, or did it come from someone lower than him. He had actually made the decision, of course, but I thought perhaps the force behind the decision had come from someone lower than he.

ANDERSON: No, because when I talked to Korth and Gilpatric that day when they informed me, and finally I pinned them down, and I said, "Well, this is Mr. McNamara." And Korth and Gilpatric said, "Yes." I said, "You mean Mr. McNamara fired me." And he said, "Well, yes, George."

O'CONNOR: Well, this was primarily because of personal conflicts resulting from, in a sense, a disagreement over the TFX then, do you feel?

ANDERSON: We get in the range of speculation because...

O'CONNOR: No, no, I'm interested really in your opinion about this.

ANDERSON: ...I never asked Mr. McNamara this question. I had a subsequent meeting with McNamara. You see, he went out of town when this happened. And I had a subsequent meeting with him. This was after I had seen the President. And I spoke very, very frankly to him, but I

[-24-]

never asked him. I didn't question him as to not reappointing me at all because, after all, if you're a boss, you want to have people with whom you can work.

That was not the issue as far as I was concerned. It was the underhanded way in which he did it—of calling Admiral McDonald back, not to let me know. I told him all he had to do was call me in and say, "Look, George, I think it would be better for the Department of Defense, the overall achievements of my objectives, or our objectives, if I have somebody else in as Chief of Naval Operations." I told him, "Gee, that would have suited me. After all, it's no fun being Chief of Naval Operations and working the way you do." But, no, it was the way it was done and the reasons that were apparently being justified.

No, I believe that, basically, this was part of his establishment of his authority over the people in uniform, that I offered a case where he could establish his authority to eliminate a voice of dissent which, of course, was completely in contradiction to President Kennedy's approach to things because, as you know, President Kennedy said he wanted dissent. But McNamara is not one who wants dissent. If you're in a meeting with Secretary McNamara and you sit down and you agree with him, he is all smiles, he's all compliments, he agrees, he said, "I couldn't agree with you more." If you dissent with him, if you're not of his opinion, everything is sour. I mean whether it's not a question of the Navy, but it's on almost anything else.

So I suspect that, a) it was a question of asserting his authority, b) knowing that, a) I was articulate and presumably respected, and c) perhaps to a lesser degree, but which probably was influential in the thing, of my testimony on the TFX. In other words, I didn't go along. McNamara is a man who is intensely loyal to his superior, intensely loyal to his superior. He, therefore, expects the same type of intense loyalty to his superior that he gives, but he doesn't have the loyalty down, you see, with which we're brought up in the military. So perhaps all this, many parts of it go together.

O'CONNOR: Well, do you know whether the opposition to your then being appointed as ambassador to Portugal after Press Club speech originated in the Department of Defense, originated, in other words, with Secretary McNamara's office?

ANDERSON: McNamara has always assumed responsibility for everything that went into the Department of Defense. I think it originated in his staff level, but, as I say, it was handled at the staff level and rejected by President Kennedy.

O'CONNOR: When you got to Portugal, did you have much criticism, did you feel much criticism toward the way the American government had dealt with Portugal in the Kennedy Administration? We had had various conflicts, one of them particularly involving Portuguese policy toward Africa.

[-25-]

ANDERSON: The feeling of the Portuguese government from Dr. Salazar on down, which was more emotional the lower down the people became in the echelon, was, a) hurt; b) they were misunderstood; c) they were very irritated at the treatment they had gotten, particularly as an ally. And most important, from their point of view, was that from their long experience in dealing with the Africans, the Negroes, they realized, according to Dr. Salazar, that it is a matter of centuries to bring these people out of their primitive state, whereas we, in our naiveté, think that this can be done in a matter of years. The other, but I'm sure that you got this from the Foreign Minister, that they felt that they had had commitments from the President of the United States. They probably produced a letter from President Roosevelt [Franklin Delano Roosevelt]. Did they?

O'CONNOR: They didn't produce that letter. I can't really talk about that.

ANDERSON: Yes. But they felt that they had an unquestioned commitment by President Roosevelt to the support of the Portuguese nation, which they've had. And this, of course, was.... Where our administrations have changed several times, not for them. That's still president of the Council, Premier Salazar, who is still in, and naturally he remembers the commitment he got from the President of the United States. So, yes, there was a feeling of hurt, resentment, irritability,

emotion, and a feeling, particularly, that we did not understand the use of power, and we did not understand the problems of the African continent.

O'CONNOR: Had the Portuguese government used the question of the Azores to attempt to get us to mollify our position?

ANDERSON: No.

O'CONNOR: Why had they not?

ANDERSON: Well, because, as the Foreign Minister has said to me many times, people talk about Portugal blackmailing the United States with the Azores, he said, "We are sufficiently aware of world affairs that a little country like Portugal does not blackmail a big country like the United States." Now they did think that they had a trump card, that the United States would not itself jeopardize the possession of the Azores by going too far. They felt that this was an advantage, a trump card, to them, but they weren't trying to play blackmail. They would not renew in writing the agreement.

O'CONNOR: The extraordinary thing is they did renew, though. They didn't renew in writing, but....

ANDERSON: Orally. It's open-ended. But if we ever imposed or agreed to economic sanctions against Portugal, we'd be out of the Azores in nothing flat.

O'CONNOR: Did you feel that relations improved considerably during 1963?

[-26-]

You got there at the end, of course. But there has been much feeling, much speculation that the United States.... Well, from the Portuguese point of view, there's much feeling that the United States profited from experience in '61 and '62, and, therefore, in '63 there was much greater understanding between these two countries. Did you find that true, or not true?

ANDERSON: Yes, I think relationships improved. I don't want to say this in an egotistic way at all. I had an excellent rapport with the Portuguese, primarily because they looked on me as an admiral. They knew that I presented things in a straightforward manner, both to them and back to Washington, which I did. And as happens so often in these cases, at times you begin to feel you're an ambassador from them to the United States, more than vice versa. But they knew that I was calling my shots as I saw them, which I did, and I had excellent relationships with Secretary Ball [George W. Ball] and Secretary Rusk. Of course, I had no relationships with President Kennedy or President Johnson [Lyndon Baines Johnson].

It was a great contrast coming back for the first time to call on President Johnson, presumably to discuss Portuguese-American relationships, and finding that the consultation with the President was a complete farce. I was put in line with two other ambassadors waiting in the Cabinet Room. President Johnson came out. The photographer was there to take the picture shaking hands, onto the next one, onto the next one. Within forty-five seconds, all three of us had our pictures taken and were out of the room. The press indicated that I had been in there, a long consultation with the President. No. Different type of a man, you see, Johnson and Kennedy. Kennedy would have found the time to discuss, and was interested in, Portuguese-American relationships. He took an hour, for example, just before I went over and talked very intelligently. President Johnson probably didn't know anything about it, wasn't interested. He had other things on his mind.

O'CONNOR: I don't want to get into the Johnson Administration, but I was interested in hearing you compare the two visits. I would have thought that the Johnson Administration would have been more sympathetic, frankly, to the problems that the United States had with Portugal that the Kennedy Administration would.

ANDERSON: Well, as I told the Portuguese on many occasions, the United States is involved on such a scale worldwide that they're working with cases of heart failure, of cancer, sometimes serious carbuncles. I said, "Portuguese-American problems which we're concerned with, they may be big carbuncles or boils to the Portuguese, but they're just little mosquito bites to the United States." I said, "You've got to put yourself in the position of the President of the United States with all his vast responsibilities." And that's been true.

Now President Kennedy had a type of mind which could take in all of these problems and show interest in all or many of them at the same time. I gather that that is not the same thing with President Johnson—completely

[-27-]

different type of a human animal.

O'CONNOR: You never felt in your dealings with President Kennedy that he was letting you down really. I don't get that impression at all from you.

ANDERSON: Oh no, no, no. Because, after all, you have to understand the problems of the President of the United States.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[-29-]

George W. Anderson, Jr. Oral History Transcript
Name Index

A

Abel, Elie, 21
Ayub Khan, Mohammad, 1

B

Ball, George W., 27
Birch, Book, 1
Burke, Arleigh A., 1, 14, 19

C

Castro, Fidel, 4
Connally, John B., Jr., 17, 19

D

Dennison, Robert L., 6

E

Eisenhower, Dwight D., 4

F

Fay, Paul B., Jr., 17, 18

G

Gilpatric, Roswell L., 12, 20, 21, 22, 23

J

Jackson, Henry M. "Scoop", 24
Johnson, Lyndon Baines, 27

K

Keating, Kenneth B., 4
Kennedy, Jacqueline Bouvier, 1
Kennedy, John F., 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12,
13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 24, 25, 27, 28
Kennedy, Robert F., 8, 9
Kerr, Robert S., 9

Korth, Fred, 17, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24

L

LeMay, Curtis E., 6, 7, 8, 19
Lemnitzer, Lyman L., 7, 18
Longstreet, Victor Mendell, 18

M

Mansfield, Mike, 9
McClellan, John L., 21, 22, 23
McCone, John A., 6
McDonald, David L., 12, 14, 25
McNamara, Robert S., 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 17,
18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24

R

Rayburn, Samuel Taliaferro, 13
Ricketts, Claude Vernon, 22
Roosevelt, Franklin Delano, 26
Rusk, Dean, 14, 15, 27

S

Salazar, António de Oliveira, 15, 16, 26
Schwebs, Dieter, 18
Shepard, Tazewell T., Jr., 3
Staubach, Roger, 8, 9
Stennis, John C., 14
Sylvester, Arthur, 19

T

Taylor, Maxwell D., 4, 7, 8, 11
Thomaz, Americo, 16

Y

Yarmolinsky, Adam, 19