

FOREWORD

Transcript Warning:

All written transcripts are imperfect abstracts of spoken conversation. Variations in sound quality and in the aural acuity of listeners can and do produce wide variations in what is heard. Even though transcripts may be prepared at great effort and with great care, many points of ambiguity are inevitable, and erroneous interpretations from transcripts are always possible. Therefore, to ensure full confidence in any and all quotations from the presidential recordings, users are strongly urged to check all transcript renditions against the actual tape recordings before publication.

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Punctuation:

The following conventions are used throughout the transcripts:

- * * * To indicate a pause in the recording while the speaker listens to the person speaking at the other end of the telephone. Used when only one side of a telephone conversation is recorded.
- [?] When the transcriber is not certain of what is said on the recording.
- To indicate a sentence which the speaker trails off without completing it.
- . . . When a speaker is interrupted before a sentence is completed.
- _____ To indicate the speaker's emphasis.
- [/] Used to enclose editorial comments of the transcriber such as /Meeting appears to be breaking up/ or /Several speakers speak at once and none of the words are intelligible./

Names:

The first time a name is mentioned, the full name is provided whenever it is known. "JFK" and "RFK" are used for President Kennedy and Robert Kennedy, respectively. When the identity of a speaker is unknown, "Speaker?" is used; when the identification of a speaker is uncertain, a question mark follows the name. The heading of each transcript gives the names of all participants listed in the President's Appointment Books as scheduled to attend the meeting.

Preparation:

These electronic documents were created from transcripts available in the audiovisual research room in the John F. Kennedy Library. The transcripts were scanned using optical character recognition and the resulting text files were proofread against the original transcripts. Some formatting changes were made.

Dictabelt 11A, Item 11A2

March 7, 1963

JFK: Well, you see the Pentagon also pointed out. . . . "Defense Secretary Rob- said at the news conference that there were no U.S. military personnel operating in the invasion." That's the point that I didn't want to make 'cause if they make that generalization, then it looks like the distinction between a guardsman and not a guardsman's the key thing.

Clifton:¹ Right.

JFK: I thought we went into that.

Clifton: We did and he, when I heard the statement it was flatly that no Arkansas national guardsmen were there.

JFK: The fact of the matter is that former U.S. guardsmen, military guardsmen from Alabama were in combat operations.

Clifton: Right.

JFK: So what's the sense in pointing. . . . Then that looks like there's some tricky distinction here.

Clifton: Right. I'll . . .

JFK: I thought I'd made that point to 'em.

Clifton: You, you did and, uh, this. . . . General Wilson² didn't put out anything but what you said. I s-. . . . They read it to me over the phone.

JFK: Will you have somebody ask 'em what they mean by saying that about McNamara,³ "no U.S. military personnel?" Because the fact of the matter is we know that. Nobody has said that. They're talking about former guardsmen.

Clifton: Right. I . . .

¹ General Chester V. Clifton.

² Major General Winston Peabody Wilson.

³ Robert S. McNamara.

JFK: I thought I . . . But the point is, General, I told the three of you that, that I didn't want these two things joined together because one then looks like the key word is guardsman.

Clifton: Right. And, uh, that's. . . . Sylvester⁴ had it absolutely clear and he put it out clear, but I'll check up and see what McNamara did.

JFK: I know McNamara didn't put out anything.

Clifton: All. . . .

JFK: It says the Pentagon. It's the same thing.

Clifton: Well, I'll check on [words unintelligible] . . .

JFK: I'd like to find out why they included that statement. Because how does that. . . . Then what does that mean that. . . . Yeah, but what do you call the Alabama group.

Clifton: Right.

JFK: They're not U.S. military personnel but then it then looks like what we're doing is separating guardsmen from other people. And the fact of the matter, nobody did it.

Clifton: Nobody did it and nobody has used it.

JFK: That's what I told everybody.

Clifton: Well, they had it straight when I, when they called me.

JFK: All right. Let's find out about it.

Clifton: I'll check on it right away.

JFK: . . . find out about it.

Clifton: I'll check on it . . .

Operator: Ready.

⁴ Arthur Sylvester.