

FOREWORD

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Punctuation:

The following conventions are used throughout the transcripts:

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

Names:

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

Preparation:

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

Papers of John F. Kennedy

Presidential Recordings

Dictabelts

Dictabelt 26A

Conversation #3: President Kennedy and George Ball

August 19, 1963

10:35 A.M.

President: Hello George.

Mr. Ball: Hello Mr. President I am sorry, I was down at the War College.

President: No, that is alright. George, let's see, first, there is an article by a fellow called George Weller on Greek shipping this morning which is rather annoying. But it is about this shipping to Cuba and who uh.

Mr. Ball: Is that in the Times?

President: Yea, it is in the Post, and who is doing it. And it makes reference to Paul Rogers' amendment. But I suppose it is to cut off assistance to any country is it.

Mr. Ball: *[talking to someone in the background]*. Alex Johnson was just here and I was just asking him about it.

President: What is it?

Mr. Ball: Yea, it cuts off aid to countries that ship to Cuba.

President: I think that we ought to have something for this press conference tomorrow. I don't know whether uh, about where we are with that. I am sure that I am going to be asked about it as well as this thing is very provocative.

Mr. Ball: We got people working it up for you and we will have it for you this afternoon.

President: You might read Weller and see what our attitude ought to be on the Rogers amendment. That is going to pass; the Rogers amendment I am sure. I don't see how they can lick it, things being as they are.

Mr. Ball: We will cover that for you.

President: Yea, and you might want to talk to the Hill people, and O'Brien about the Rogers amendment. And I should think particularly after the Weller article that is going to help it very much. Now I talked to O'Brien on Bokaro again and they are still around with Bloomfield. You don't have any different thoughts than the ones discussed the other day do you.

Mr. Ball: No, I thought we came out at the right point if we could work that out that way. What does Larry think?

President: Well they were up there and they didn't know whether they could uh, what he was concerned about was that if Bloomfield kept his present language somebody would offer a substitute to make it 50 million and that might pass. And number two that uh, well I think our decision the other day is we just kill Bokaro itself.

Mr. Ball: That is right. I think to the extent we can focus it on that. We don't get involved with this _____ which could uh.

President: No, of course it makes our situation I guess in India more complicated.

Mr. Ball: Well I think that is right although to the extent that we can disassociate you and the executive department. Have to put the blame on Congress. Tell them they are going to uh.

President: Right, ok, fine. The other thing was I talked to Davis this morning about that Stelle business.

Mr. Ball: I got a telegram off last night to George McGee on it.

President: I saw that one. I just want to be sure that Stelle wasn't going on his own sort of pace because this isn't the time we want to agree with anything with the Russians.

Mr. Ball: No, all he was really doing was to try to smoke him out on what they had in mind on this observation.

President: It was worded badly I think.

Mr. Ball: It was worded to the extent that he said he would accept the static observation post without advance notification. I think it may have gone a little further than it should have. But we are running that down and see if there was a basis for it. In any event this whole thing is coming up on Wednesday in that, in Paris the Germans will have a full opportunity to express themselves there.

President: I got a letter from [Konrad] Adenauer. Did you see that letter?

Mr. Ball: Yea, and we got an answer for you uh, a suggested answer which we are sending over.

President: May not need an answer.

Mr. Ball: Well Adenauer leaves today for _____ you know. So I think it will be quieted down for a little while.

President: The other question is whether we ought to uh, about those troops. Do you have any further thoughts about those?

Mr. Ball: You probably saw the incoming indicating that [Willy] Brandt had said this thing was discussed with the cabinet. That Adenauer hadn't understood it. That Brandt made a full explanation. And that Adenauer seemed not to be absolutely happy. And that [Erhardt] Schroder has said that there was no problem and that he was prepared to go along. Now what created this last problem was that at the Secretary's press conference, they asked a silly question about a 10 percent reduction in Germany.

President: Yeah.

Mr. Ball: And he said no there was no such thing contemplated. And this was interpreted in Germany meaning there was no 10 percent reduction in Berlin contemplated. That question was asked the wrong way. But that is all cleared up and with Adenauer going away and nobody else concerned about it. Brandt happy and Schroder happy I'd be inclined just to leave it.

President: Ok, good. Thank you, right.