

*The*  
PRESIDENTIAL  
RECORDINGS  
  
JOHN F. KENNEDY

➔➔➔➔ *THE GREAT CRISES, VOLUME ONE* ➔➔➔➔

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JULY 30–AUGUST 1962

Timothy Naftali  
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*Associate Editors, Volume One*

Patricia Dunn  
*Assistant Editor*

Philip Zelikow and Ernest May  
*General Editors*



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**Dean:** What do you fear? That's what I want to know. [*Unclear exchange.*]

**Kaysen:** Mac, Taz wanted you to know that he's collecting [*unclear*] for you or for somebody's customer. [*Unclear.*]<sup>238</sup>

**Bundy:** Yeah, I have a customer. [*Unclear exchange.*]

*Door closes. The President forgot to turn off the machine and the tape spooled out. There is some indistinct corridor discussion and then someone, probably Evelyn Lincoln, turned off the machine.*

As Bundy had suggested, the matter could wait 24 hours. Lovett and McCloy could not come down together on July 31, so the next meeting on the test ban would be held over to August 1. In the meantime, the White House Press Office announced that the President would be giving a press conference Wednesday afternoon. The President already intended to discuss Peru at that time; but he would also be expected to have something to say on Arthur Dean's instructions by then.

The President had one more meeting before going for his second swim of the day. An old friend from Kennedy's time on the Senate Labor Rackets Committee, Clark Mollenhoff, was in for an unrecorded 20-minute chat. Finally, at 7:25 P.M., the President could call this well-taped day over.

## Wednesday, August 1, 1962

After taping nearly four hours of conversation on Monday, the President left no tapes from the next day.<sup>1</sup> Tuesday, July 31 was largely taken up with ceremonial duties. In the morning, President Kennedy met with the Brazilian student leaders as suggested by Lincoln Gordon. Later he attended the swearing in of the new secretary of health, education and welfare, Anthony Celebrezze. However that evening, Kennedy held a very interesting meeting with Georgi Bolshakov that would have provided

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238. Tazewell Shepherd was the President's naval aide.

1. The Secret Service numbering system suggests that no meeting tapes were made on 31 July 1962.

some insight into his back-channel relations with the Soviet Union had he taped it. Ostensibly a journalist, Bolshakov was actually a Soviet military intelligence officer. Since May 1961, he had had regular meetings with Attorney General Robert Kennedy. Although used by the Kennedy brothers to send feelers to Moscow, Bolshakov was not the Kremlin's special envoy, though his reports on the Kennedys were sent directly to Nikita Khrushchev. At the end of July, however, Khrushchev had decided to use Bolshakov to request that the United States stop overhead reconnaissance of Soviet ships plying to Havana. The Oval Office meeting was arranged for July 31 so that President Kennedy could respond directly. The Soviet record of this conversation (no U.S. record has been found) indicates that Kennedy agreed to suspend overhead reconnaissance of Soviet merchant ships but wanted a promise that Khrushchev would put the Berlin question "on ice" until after the fall congressional elections.<sup>2</sup> Nothing came of President Kennedy's Berlin condition and so the President's own promise to suspend overhead reconnaissance was not kept. Unfortunately, it would not be until mid-October that President Kennedy understood the reason for Khrushchev's acute sensitivity to the security of Soviet cargoes heading for Cuba.

The President resumed taping the next day, August 1. He had breakfast with the Vice President and his domestic policy advisers and then went into a meeting with the U.S. Ambassador to Cambodia and Averell Harriman, the assistant secretary of state for Far Eastern affairs. A large ceremony followed, at which the President signed the Foreign Aid Bill. The Secretary of State took a few minutes of the President's time as did the daughter of the state committee chairman for New York, Catherine Pendergast. None of this was taped.

Then the President turned to the stubborn problem of the U.S. position at the nuclear test ban talks in Geneva. The White House had already scheduled a press conference for 4:00 P.M. that afternoon, where the President intended to announce this new position. The President would tape their meeting.

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2. The meeting with Georgi Bolshakov is listed in the Presidential Appointments Diary. See Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble": Khrushchev, Castro, and Kennedy, 1958-1964* (New York: Norton, 1997), pp. 193-95, for details of the meeting.

11:30 A.M. – 12:43 P.M.

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*Now, the question will really be whether for the next six months the United States ought to look like there is new information, and we haven't changed our position at all, and the cat really therefore will be on our backs. Or whether we say, "Well, based on the new information, here's where we'll go, and go no further" and the cat then is on the Russians' backs.*

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### Meeting on Nuclear Test Ban<sup>3</sup>

After the test ban meeting on Monday, July 30, had adjourned, Kennedy asked John McCloy, who had served as the President's adviser on disarmament until the formation of ACDA in 1962, and Robert Lovett, a former under secretary of state and secretary of defense, to travel from New York to Washington in order to study the VELA seismic results. Kennedy also asked the director of central intelligence, John McCone, to review the seismic results and to join with McCloy and Lovett to serve as an advisory group.

On Tuesday, July 31, Secretary McNamara and Director of Central Intelligence McCone spent roughly three hours reviewing the results of the VELA seismic improvement program with a group including Dr. Doyle Northrup, technical director of the Air Force Technical Application Center (AFTAC); Dr. Carl Romney, also of AFTAC; and Department of Defense general counsel Norton.<sup>4</sup> The group developed a table showing the changes in basic detection capability and the analysis of natural events by the number which would remain unidentified under three detection systems: (1) the system as it currently existed or was known in March

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3. Including President Kennedy, McGeorge Bundy, Arthur Dean, Adrian Fisher, William Foster, Roswell Gilpatric, Vice President Johnson, Robert Lovett, John McCloy, John McCone, Edward R. Murrow, and Dean Rusk. Note that the official presidential log for August 1 does not list McCloy, Lovett, or Murrow as participants of this meeting, but both McCone's August 2 memorandum and Glenn Seaborg's account indicate that they were indeed present. Seaborg's account also implies that Seaborg himself was present, as well as Dr. Franklin Long of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. [Glenn T. Seaborg, with Benjamin S. Loeb, *Kennedy, Khrushchev and the Test Ban* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981) pp. 167–68]. Tape 4, John F. Kennedy Library, President's Office Files, Presidential Recordings Collection.

4. Northrup was harshly criticized by his superiors in the Air Force for his handling of AFTAC's new information on seismic detection (see Memorandum of July 27 discussion, drafted by McCone, Central Intelligence Agency, DCI Memos for Record, 4/7/62–8/21/62; see Supplement).

1962, (2) the March 1962 system with the most recent technology and knowledge, and (3) the so-called national system. Probabilities of success and deficiencies were also noted in the table.<sup>5</sup>

On Tuesday evening, Lovett visited McCone at his home. The two talked, and Lovett remained at McCone's home for dinner (although McCone himself was out for the evening), reading the transcripts of the joint committee hearings of July 19 and 23, as well as additional material from the White House and McCone. Lovett gave McCloy and a select group of scientists a briefing on these documents the next morning at 10:00 A.M.

Kennedy convened the meeting at 11:30 to continue the discussion of negotiating strategies at Geneva, as well as his statement for that afternoon's press conference.<sup>6</sup>

The President turned on the machine as Dean Rusk suggested the President hear from William Foster, the director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, who that morning took some soundings on Capitol Hill.

**Dean Rusk:** . . . including our security interests in trying to bring some end to this arms race, and then secondly, having decided what would be right for us to do, to consider what Arthur Dean's negotiating problems are, to see how we can best give effect to that position.

I think though that, since you [*unclear*] material already that it might be well for Mr. Foster to bring you up to date on his discussions with the [congressional] leadership, and you might want to get comments from Mr. Lovett and Mr. McCloy as to how this appears to them, after their rather extensive briefing, [*unclear*] first [*unclear*], summarized.

**William Foster:** Well, we had a very interesting breakfast this morning, Mr. President. Senator [Richard] Russell, Senator [Henry "Scoop"] Jackson, Senator [John] Pastore, and Senator [Stuart] Symington were there, and we put before them what we considered to be the improvements in [detection] capabilities, and then I think I can simplify the discussion, which was quite extensive, by saying that, at the end, Senator Russell said

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5. Table not attached to McCone's Memorandum for the File, 2 August 1962, *FRUS*, 7: 531-33.

6. For the text of the statement which Kennedy read at the press conference, see *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, John F. Kennedy, 1962* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1963), p. 591.

that he recognized that these scientific achievements probably were sufficient to lead to some modification in the number of our on-site inspections.

The point at which he felt he would have to differ very strongly with any change, was in changing the control posts from internationally manned to nationally manned. We informed him we felt that we had sufficient ability from outside to detect, without any Soviet contributions from their control posts, to detect better than we could before, and we still insisted on on-site inspection.

We felt therefore, if we had international supervision of the control posts on Soviet territory, that this would give us enough of a handle so those stations would at least make some contribution.

Well, he said, "Maybe so." He said, "I shall have to tell you that I would have to vigorously fight any proposal of a treaty which gave up this international supervision." Now . . .

**McGeorge Bundy:** Gave up the supervision?

**Foster:** The international supervision of these control posts.

**Arthur Dean:** Well, do you mean the international supervision or international manning?<sup>7</sup>

**Foster:** Well, [*unclear*].

**John McCone:** Well I [*unclear*] the proposal he makes, and he was talking about international supervision with national manning, but they'd be interested in the supervision being on the job all the time. He's not in favor of a roving team that would spot-check them occasionally.

**Bundy:** [*Unclear*] internationally when some things get crossed—

**McCone:** That's right, that's right—[*Unclear exchange*.]

**Unidentified:** He will not raise those issues.

**McCone:** He will [not] what?

**Unidentified:** He will not raise those issues.

**McCone:** On the basis . . . on an international operation, . . . national . . .

**Rusk:** Mr. President, you will recall it is our proposal we have an outside scientist stationed at these stations to ensure against tinkering.

**Foster:** Now, he further said on the way up to the Hill—Adrian

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7. This was an important distinction. The existing U.S. position, as it was presented in the April 1961 U.S.-U.K. draft treaty, was that these control posts—19 on Soviet territory according to the Geneva system of 180 stations worldwide—would have international staff. The Soviets rejected this proposal. During the White House meeting on 30 July a consensus had formed that in light of the new scientific guidance it would be acceptable to allow the Soviets to staff their own control stations so long as they agreed to international supervision. This new position was proposed informally to the Soviets a few days later, on 6 August, in a private note to the Soviet delegation in Geneva.

Fisher rode up with him, pursued this conversation—he said that if we simply, in the discussion, said that we were willing to discuss a change in the relationship of these control posts to the international system, without identifying what “supervision” meant, that he would not give us too much trouble.<sup>8</sup> I think this is being appraised. So that I think this, I think some education—

**Bundy:** Well, obviously it’s been modified [*unclear*] as John McCone [*unclear*] in his more recent . . .

**Foster:** Well, I think that, while you’d have difficulties, this is not impossible on the basis of putting forward a willingness to modify our existing treaty, which is on the table, in the direction of lesser on-site inspections, on the basis of fewer control posts, and on the basis of a willingness to discuss the relationship of these control posts to an international commission.<sup>9</sup> Is that a fair statement?

**Adrian Fisher:** I would think so, [*unclear*]. His own feeling, right now, is simply, they have not crossed the bridge in on-site inspections, and we’re still just . . . As he said, [*unclear*] we’re still . . .

**President Kennedy:** Yeah.

**Fisher:** They haven’t given us the signal that they’re willing to talk, and then they’re, under these circumstances I think, you know, you’re maybe just going to a lot of effort . . .<sup>10</sup>

**Foster:** He said I don’t trust them at all, [and] I don’t think they’re going to do anything, but if you did it this way, this probably is a risk we could assume.<sup>11</sup> It’d be a—

**President Kennedy:** And have the Soviets ever . . . do they ever make a very sharp distinction between their willingness to accept a degree of international manning of the control posts and manned inspections? Actually, the control posts [*unclear*] doesn’t seem to me to present any espionage hazards comparable to free inspection. Have they made that distinction or do they—?

**Dean:** Well, they say as of the present time that they will not permit *any* stationing of anybody, neutrals or anyone else, at control posts on their territory, nor will they permit *any* on-site inspections by anybody outside the [*unclear*].

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8. Fisher was deputy director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency from 1961.

9. This would be in order to accommodate the proposal made by the eight neutral delegations to the Geneva talks on 16 April that an international commission of scientists be established to supervise the detection process.

10. The Soviets had not accepted the principle of on-site inspections.

11. Referring to the Soviets.



**President Kennedy:** They don't make any distinction between one being [*unclear*].

**Dean:** No.

**President Kennedy:** Fine, good, well, perhaps, Mr. McCloy?

*The congressional reaction to the concept of "international supervision" for the control posts introduced a new twist into the policy review. The President, however, decided to move the meeting along. He was keen to focus on the advice of McCloy and Lovett regarding Arthur Dean's negotiating instructions.*

**John McCloy:** Well, I've listened to this briefing this morning and have given it some thought. I learned that by . . . coming to the conclusion that we've got to make a very clear statement, and I think we ought to make it beforehand rather than in [*unclear*] composite treaty, of our insistence upon the on-site inspections.

[Soviet foreign minister Andrei] Gromyko, as you confirmed, has said that this is an undebatable point. I think we ought to be just as undebatable on the other side, and I believe that the offer can't be divorced entirely from the test ban, can't be isolated from the test ban.

I believe it has a *big* implication on other aspects of our disarmament. I think, unless we get this embedded in the whole disarmament process, that we're not going to get anywhere, and I feel that if we gave way on this, if we accepted, ignored the statements which they have so explicitly made at this point, this would be an encouragement to further obstruction. I think the sooner we meet that head-on, the better off we are.

**Bundy:** Can I ask you one question on that?

**McCloy:** Yeah.

**Bundy:** Would you . . . Supposing, which is not currently the case, but supposing we had a really major advance and could tell without inspection, no matter what they may say—<sup>12</sup>

**McCloy:** What I'm putting my accent on is verification rather than various independent controls.

**Bundy:** It isn't that you want to go there in order to go there; it's that you've got to know.

**McCloy:** That's it. I've got to know whether they are cheating, I've

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12. Bundy questioned the need to make Soviet acceptance of on-site inspection the sine qua non for all arms control or arms reduction deals. An atmospheric or partial test ban, for example, could be verified by the United States without a presence on Soviet territory.

got to know. I've got to come down and test this event, if it's a suspicious event. And I've got to do it, and I don't mean in regard to a test ban, but I've got to do it all the way along the line, in disarmament, or else we're not going . . . it isn't in the interest of the United States to disarm.

**Rusk:** The answer to Mac is that the object of inspections is to provide assurance.

**Unidentified:** —Feedback.

**Rusk:** If you can clearly provide assurance —

**Unidentified:** That's right.

**Rusk:** [ *Unclear* ] day you look at it.

**Bundy:** There are people who say the object of inspections is to establish the principle. I didn't think that . . .

**McCloy:** Well, that's not what I mean, no. I mean, for the principle is what—

**Unidentified:** We need to know.

**McCloy:** —we need to know. We can't equivocate on what we need to know. And, therefore, I would say to them that, you've made the statement that you are prepared [to accept on-site inspections] . . . We are not going to concede in any sense that we can't have on-site inspections. It's demanded . . . it's an element that's going to run through all the disarmament discussions. If you're ready to give way on that, *then* we're ready to sit down with you and discuss these modifications that we feel the advance of the art has enabled us to do.

**Rusk:** Mr. President, I think Mr. Dean would agree that Lord Home and I both laid a very strong basis for this point at the last meeting, where we had—<sup>13</sup>

**Dean:** That's right. Even the Pole.<sup>14</sup>

**Rusk:** —several people who came up after it and said that we had made a very fine statement. Emphasizing the very point that you made that inspection has to come about. This secrecy is incompatible with—

**McCloy:** It's incompatible with constructive disarmament.

**President Kennedy:** Well, we . . . I understood that the Secretary of Defense, after examining this new scientific information, came to the conclusion that based on this new information, instead of insisting on 12 to 20, we could protect our national interests by having only six on-site

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13. Alec Douglas Home, Lord Home, was the British foreign secretary.

14. Presumably Professor Manfield Lachs, Polish deputy representative to the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee.

[inspections]. That is not our governmental position, but that may or may not be Secretary McNamara's position.<sup>15</sup> But there isn't any doubt that if they would accept the principle that we would be able to change our required number of—

**McCloy:** On-site.

**President Kennedy:** . . . on-site inspections. Now . . .

**Unidentified:** That's correct.

**President Kennedy:** This may be just academic unless they change it. The question would be whether we would indicate, with what words we would indicate our willingness to change, providing the principle is accepted. Or do we, when Mr. Dean goes over there, and they say . . . He says that he doesn't have the principle accepted, and they say to him, "well, assuming the principle were accepted, what would this new scientific information permit you, require you to insist upon?"

Does he then say, "Well we can't even discuss that until we first get the principle accepted?" Or does he say, "Well, we could reduce it, and then perhaps negotiate a reduction." How does he handle that?

**McCloy:** We would . . . Is the chief accent, and if I could just . . . is the chief accent on the number of control stations, the reduction of control stations, rather than the reduction of the on-site inspections? I do believe as a concomitant of this better detection system, we probably won't have as great a necessity for on-site inspections, as you would have had, but I—

**President Kennedy:** I understood that this new information could really . . . that the nationally manned, internationally monitored control stations would permit you to check information outside and inside in such a way that it really wouldn't be very worthwhile for them to try to cheat on the . . . There would be quite a risk in their cheating with the kind of information they send out from the nationally manned control station.

**Bundy:** It's true, Mr. President, but remember they can always lower the threshold way down, and enlarge their level of safety.<sup>16</sup> I mean, change—

**President Kennedy:** Yeah, but that's why I think that's why we have to insist on the international inspection. Now, if you have six international inspections combined with any kind of effective international monitoring

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15. John McCone had stepped out of the meeting by this point. He would become very concerned later when it was reported to him that Robert McNamara's position was that the United States could live with as few as six on-site inspections.

16. Bundy is referring to the fact that the Soviets could resort to testing very low yield devices, which would be very difficult to detect.

system of the nationally manned control posts, combined with an adequate number of stations outside the Soviet Union, the rewards for the Soviets scientifically of cheating is really, based on what we heard the other day, is rather limited. They're not going to gain anything, given the way the art is now developing. They're not going to be able to make much progress, with these rather limited tests underground, and the gamble, to have six or eight international inspections . . . I don't see that it's worth it to the Soviet Union to take that chance to cheat, because they're not going to gain much.

If they were testing in the atmosphere, they can make great progress, but they're not going to be able to make that kind of progress underground. What is the return to that? Why should they cheat under those conditions?

**McCloy:** Well, anybody that's experimenting, underground or in the air or where[ever], as against the fellow that isn't experimenting, is gaining. You've got to operate—

**President Kennedy:** Yeah, but even . . . but our scientists tell us that the amount of gain they can make is very low with these tests, if they cheated. Compared to what they now have as a result of their last atmospheric test, and will have as a result of their [Soviet code-named TYCHI] one, is quite limited.

**McCloy:** Well, I think that's probably so, although this morning, Dr. [Leland] Haworth was a little bit hesitant—

**Bundy:** I'll tell you what is real clear, and I think this is the more logical one if history is on our side. What they would do is stuff that would not be cheating, up to the point when they abrogated. Then they would abrogate massively. This would keep their laboratories alive; they could plan against a date. That's the more serious [*unclear*].

**President Kennedy:** But that's an argument against any test ban.

**Bundy:** That's correct. Yeah.

**Unidentified:** That's right. That's right.

**President Kennedy:** Now, against that we have to put the studies of the Department of Defense about the problem of diffusion—<sup>17</sup>

**Foster:** The risk—

**President Kennedy:** And other countries testing and making these things so cheap that everybody will have them in great quantities. So that it's not a single scale.

**McCloy:** Mr. President, although it may be true, that you don't get in

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17. Kennedy was reminding the group that he believed a strong argument in favor of a test ban was that it would curb nuclear proliferation.

bulk, once, a great advantage, if you have a steady accumulation from year to year of underground testing, and we not being able to test—and by assumption we can't test because we're an open society; they can—maybe that accumulation in the end is pretty substantial.

I'm not saying that this isn't a risk that we ought to take. I'm very much in favor of a test ban, as you know. I think it's symbolic. It has great significance for our security. To achieve it, I'm ready to make some sacrifices for it.

I don't think that you can treat this [as] entirely *de minima*, however: a constant series of underground, undetected testing on their part, as against no testing on ours.

**President Kennedy:** No, that's right. That's why we're insisting on inspection, as I say the Secretary said that . . .<sup>18</sup> I wonder . . . We've got two problems: One is what I might say this afternoon, because I think these stories that have come out have caused an unnecessary concern and alarm, because they're always using the words *soft* and *concessions* and all the rest, and the scientific information is not regarded as hard enough to make concessions or to soften.

So I'd like . . . It seems to me I ought to really get it as clearly as we can today what our position is going to be, and also what we ought to, what Arthur Dean ought to say. What's your thought, Mr. Lovett, on what we ought to do on this?

**Robert Lovett:** Well, I agree, Mr. President, with the comments of McCloy. I'm a member of the once-burnt, twice-shy club down here. I've been through this Hans Bethe affair, and the Committee of Experts, and I'm aware of the fact that in this particular instance you have no scientific breakthrough.<sup>19</sup> The scientists themselves confirmed that this morning, as they have in the recent past.

We have some improvement. There's no reason to believe preliminary figures can't be materially changed, changed in the important elements at least, and there's no reason to think that additional improvement won't occur over a period of time, but at the moment, there is no scientific breakthrough. There is some slight improvement in detection means outside the country.

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18. The President may have been referring to McNamara's apparent belief that the number of required on-site inspections could be reduced without any additional risks to national security.

19. Lovett appears to have been expressing frustration at the contradictory recommendations made over previous years by the Foreign Weapons Evaluation Group chaired by Cornell University physics professor Hans A. Bethe.

Secondly, I have a feeling that we are making this decision unnecessarily complicated for ourselves by regarding this as a negotiation. I don't think this is a negotiation, Mr. President. I think this is a phase of the Cold War, and I think it ties in with a lot of other things, as, for example, the GNC form of the draft of the treaty.<sup>20</sup>

We are told by Gromyko and [Soviet negotiator Valerian] Zorin within the last few weeks that they will "not permit verification of amounts of weapons and forces at any stage of a disarmament plan, not even in the [*unclear*] zone."<sup>21</sup>

In those circumstances, it seems to me that we have to pay far less attention to the posture of this country, than we do to our own security. The posture internationally is nice, but the security is the thing that keeps us alive in the future.

My own feeling about it is that, in the present circumstances, we ought to go for a comprehensive treaty, say *nothing* at this time about atmospheric, not say in our discussions with them that we might accept a reduced number of things, because I don't see why we should. What we need to do is to talk about *discuss* instead of *accept*. The language in one of these reports, in the book that Mac [Bundy] was good enough to give us a chance to study last night, uses that language.

**Edward R. Murrow:** What language?

**Lovett:** *Accept.*

**Murrow:** Oh. There's been a change.

**Lovett:** Well, it changed overnight because it was given it to me last night.

**Bundy:** I'm not sure I have the latest figures. I can't tell [*unclear*].

[*Unclear exchange. McCloy is heard saying "On Monday" perhaps in reference to the date of the figures he consulted.*]

**Lovett:** [*Unclear*] . . . would probably help the position of the United States. [*Laughter.*]

**President Kennedy:** We're trying to . . .

**Lovett:** I think it's perfectly clear, to be realistic about this, that we are not going to get agreement from the Soviets for on-site inspection for verification purposes.

An interesting sideline to that, which probably Dean [Rusk] knows, is that Mr. Khrushchev has been very outspoken recently. He says that

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20. The abbreviation GNC stands for Group of Nonaligned Countries.

21. The United States's spring 1962 proposal for general and complete disarmament made to the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee in Geneva included a provision for zonal inspection.

there's no self-respecting country [that] can accept such control. He's speaking now of retained arms. He will let us inspect the arms which are going to be destroyed, but not the arms that are being retained. In other words, we can go into the morgue and count the bodies, but we can't go into the maternity ward and count what's coming.<sup>22</sup>

And, he says this in spite of the fact, and he'd be far more persuasive if he remembered this, that he proposed just precisely this form of verification by inspection under the Rapacki Plan . . . Germany, Poland, and Czechoslovakia.<sup>23</sup>

So the net of my feeling is that we ought to approach this entirely realistically. We ought to put it forward in such a way that we make it clear that unless they are prepared to abandon their complete refusal to agree to any form of obligatorily accepted verification by inspection . . . if they will do that, then you are prepared to discuss the application of any modernization program of these techniques to the problem of internationally . . . of formal control systems. The number, I should think, we would want to avoid, Mr. President, discussing. We don't know, and I think it's far too early in any negotiation, to get into it.

**President Kennedy:** Mr. Dean, do you want to make any comment?

**Dean:** Well, I agree a hundred percent that we ought to discuss first, primarily whether it's in the security interests of this country. And I don't think that we ought to get into this question of numbers first. I can go back and discuss with Zorin with respect to whether or not, as a matter of principle, they would take any on-site inspections. [*Unclear*] it may mean that we can get them to accept some, although Gromyko told the Secretary [Rusk] very clearly they would not. Mr. Zorin has said the same thing to me.

You then get down to the question of what do we want to accomplish. We probably are now going to have another month's [worth] of discussion at Geneva before we adjourn for the UNGA.<sup>24</sup> Madame [Alva] Myrdal, who is in London. . . . Her last act as foreign minister of Sweden . . . [she is]

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22. Kennedy liked this turn of phrase. He would use it in a response to a reporter's question at his afternoon press conference.

23. In October 1957, Polish foreign minister Adam Rapacki proposed a denuclearized zone in Central Europe to extend through Poland, Czechoslovakia, and both Germanies. His proposal also included limitations on conventional arms in the region and a nonaggression pact between the Warsaw Pact and NATO. In December 1957, chairman of the Soviet Council of Ministers, Nikolai Bulganin, publicly endorsed the plan, but the Eisenhower administration rejected it on the basis that the limitations it would place on NATO's deployments would be detrimental to Western security interests, particularly in the Federal Republic of Germany.

24. U.N. General Assembly.

terribly interested personally in this question of a test ban treaty, and that they want to wait to see if we're not going to come forward and make some proposals on the basis of this supposed new technical knowledge.<sup>25</sup> And if we don't, that they're going to come through and probably put some kind of a proposal of a treaty based, I guess, almost entirely on the eight-nation memorandum, which they initiated.<sup>26</sup>

And, what concerns me then is we might lose control of the negotiations at about the time that we went into the UNGA. Now as Senator [Stuart] Symington said this morning, "Well what of it? What do we care? If the UNGA is against us, that's so much the better, and we don't care who has the majority in the UNGA."

Well, I would hate, and I'd hesitate to see us lose control of [the] negotiations, [*unclear*] the fact that we now have 106 against us, Burundi and Algeria numbered in there, with . . . We started with 52, two-thirds of 70. You'll have the Africans in there, playing a pretty important position. I think we're going to be negotiating on this for a long time.

I would like, if we can, and I don't want to give away anything on security, and I don't want to be making any promises that on the basis of science that we can't perform, but it does seem to all of us, even Jack [McCloy] knows, from the time I got into this thing<sup>27</sup> that this 180 [stations] proposal, 3 billion dollar investment figure, taking four years to install, is just not working.<sup>28</sup> We've always wanted to get a more workable system. Not any concession to the Russians, but just a workable, efficient, and effective system. I would like to be in the position, and even though Zorin says flatly they won't take any on-site [inspections], to be able to outline that we believe—without going into too much of actual detail—but we do believe that this Geneva system could be replaced by a system which would not only, except in certain respects, would be more *efficient* than the Geneva system, [but] would go into effect immediately. I think it would be workable, and I think we at least have to come out of these Geneva negotiations with some forward movement on the part of the United States, so that we don't go into the UNGA with, in effect, saying, "Yes, we know there's some technical improvement, but we won't discuss it." I think that would put us in a very bad light at Geneva and in [*unclear*] world opinion.

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25. Alva Myrdal was the head of Swedish delegation to the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee in Geneva.

26. Proposed at Geneva, April 1962.

27. Dean had been the U.S. disarmament negotiator since February 1961.

28. Dean said *nations* here but clearly meant *stations*.



**Rusk:** Well I think with Geneva—

**Fisher:** We could reduce, materially reduce our control stations, don't you think?

**Dean:** Now when you say "materially reduce," I would [*unclear interjection*] I want to be clear that what we're really talking about is going to about 80 instead of 180.

**Unidentified:** Going to what?

**Dean:** We're going to [talk] about 80 instead of 180. The 25 is seismic stations. You're still going to have your acoustic—<sup>29</sup>

**Unidentified:** Acoustic and electronic.

**Dean:** Your acoustic over in the air, your electromagnetic pulse. You won't have all three—acoustic, electromagnetic, and seismic—at every one, but you'd be working these technical—

**Bundy:** At 80 locations.

**Dean:** At 80 locations, and you'd be working in collaboration with these universities around the world. They'll all tie in together. So you'll probably have about a total of about 25 of what they call these [*unclear*]—

**Unidentified:** Seismic active relays.

**Dean:** Huh?

**President Kennedy:** If we get [*unclear*], can we not say that this is, that these 80 would be . . . in addition to the advantage of speed or immediacy, they ought to be more effective?

**Dean:** Be more effective. Yes.

**Bundy:** It wouldn't be more effective than the old system would be, but they're more effective than the initial designed effectiveness of the old system.

**Dean:** Well, you can put it into effect almost immediately. You don't have to wait—

**Bundy:** That's right.

**Dean:** —for four years. It's on operating—

**McCloy:** Oh, I'm greatly relieved that we're off the hook.

**Dean:** What?

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29. Here the conversation picked up on the difference between the number of control stations of any type and those designed simply to detect seismic (earthquake) waves. At the 30 July meeting Kennedy became confused as some of his advisers argued for reducing the number to 25 and others to 50, without making clear that the smaller number included only seismic control stations and the larger included all detection formats. No one mentioned the number 80 at the earlier meeting.

**McCloy:** I'm greatly relieved that we're off the hook on that 180. That was a cumbersome number of . . . unworkable . . .<sup>30</sup>

**Fisher:** We're not off the hook, yet. It still sits there at the moment.

**McCloy:** Well, if we can get off, [unclear] if we can get off.

**Fisher:** Well, this is what we're recommending.

**President Kennedy:** Can we describe this phase of it as making, rather than the word *concessions* and *softening* and so on, that it will make this part of the system more effective? And why is it we're going to be able to do this immediately and have to wait four years for the other? How would you describe this?

**Dean:** Well, we've got the, we've got the working stations, sir. We've got this equipment under the Geneva program which was already given to them, if we can get these . . .

**Bundy:** But we need at least six months to a year. [Unclear exchange.]

**Dean:** Well, maybe six months to a year as against roughly four years, I believe.

**President Kennedy:** And they're clearly expensive [unclear].

**Dean:** Oh, nowhere near as expensive as—

**President Kennedy:** What will it cost [unclear]?

**Dean:** ACDA costs on the 180 stations was estimated at 3 billion and operating costs half a billion and 35,000 men. It always seemed to me fantastic.

**President Kennedy:** And now what is . . . Your cost is what?

**Bundy:** Well, those figures have never been very hard.<sup>31</sup>

**Dean:** No, no.

**Unidentified:** I'd be careful about . . .

**Unidentified:** I'd be careful . . .

**Unidentified:** We don't have many, we don't have many soft figures. [Unclear.]

**President Kennedy:** Well, now, that's . . . What else have we . . .

*As the President tried to refocus the discussion, there was a side conversation about the cost of the Geneva system. Bundy can be heard saying "more economical than" and someone else added, perhaps as a way of explaining the savings, "men, money, and durables."*

**President Kennedy:** Now I think that . . . I'd quite agree with Senator

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30. McCloy was referring to the number of control stations.

31. Perhaps evidence of how little confidence there was that the Geneva system would ever be accepted and implemented.

Symington, if we finally get down to where we are about to sign something, we're not that interested in giving them something to go away, as far as we're concerned. It's just a question of [unclear] at this point and which one is going to be the future of the Soviet position. There's no reason for us to make it more difficult if we can make it easier for ourselves.

**Dean:** That's right.

**President Kennedy:** It's just a question of what our posture is compared to theirs. If we sign, and then it becomes a . . . if there's any doubt about our positional piece,<sup>32</sup> then we ought to try to figure out why we will look like we are the opponent when it clearly is the Soviet Union.<sup>33</sup>

**Bundy:** Let me give you one more fact which is in active consideration both on the policy and on how to handle it today. We have signals that the Soviet low-yield tests in the atmosphere [unclear] first indications of higher altitude [unclear].

**Lovett:** Right on schedule. [Unclear exchange.]

**Bundy:** We have announced that we will release—  
*Eleven seconds excised as classified information.*

**McCloy:** Mr. President, you wouldn't use the word *eighty* this afternoon in the press conference, would you?<sup>34</sup>

**President Kennedy:** No.

**Fisher:** Did I understand, Mr. McCloy, that the word *material reduction* . . .<sup>35</sup>

**McCloy:** Well, that's what I would say, yes. It seems to me that it's bound to be [unclear] . . .

**President Kennedy:** *Unusually significant reduction?* Or [unclear]?

**Dean:** I think you could use the word or term *significant reduction in your* . . .

**Bundy:** "In the structure of the detection system."

**Dean:** Yes. But at the same time . . .

**President Kennedy:** . . . you make a more effective [unclear]—<sup>36</sup>

**Bundy:** Cheaper, more quicker . . .

32. President Kennedy meant "negotiating position."

33. Sensitive to the role of public diplomacy on this issue, the President made a point of inviting veteran broadcaster, the chief of the U.S. Information Agency, Edward R. Murrow, to these test ban meetings.

34. Lovett was referring to the number that Dean mentioned earlier in the meeting for all control stations in a proposed new verification system.

35. In the number of control stations.

36. Concerned that even this language might be viewed as a concession, Kennedy is eager to remind the public that the new, slimmer version of the Geneva system would be equally as, or more effective than, the originally proposed version.

**Dean:** Doing it more quickly, and I think, in most instances, equally as effective. [*Unclear exchange.*]

**Bundy:** That's a way of producing the same effectiveness, [as] the initial assigned effectiveness?

**Lovett:** That's all right, no it's all right.

**Dean:** It gives us the same effectiveness as the initially designed means available.

**Bundy:** The same effectiveness we first hoped to get of our new system. You see the point. [*Unclear exchange.*]

**Dean:** There is a slight . . . there is one detraction from that. There is a slight degradation of this new system in identification.

**Lovett:** That's right.

**Dean:** If you don't . . . slight degradation in your ability to identify nuclear explosions in the Soviet Union if you don't have the number of control posts inside the Soviet Union as was originally contemplated by the '58 system.

**Foster:** You can't fix the locations effectively, either. [*Several people speak up at once.*]

**Bundy:** —locations very close together. [*Unclear*] probably need a larger area for inspection.

*McCone has apparently reentered the room at some point.*

**Lovett:** Yeah.

**McCone:** I'd be careful about references to the capabilities of the original system, for this reason, that the original system, we knew had a threshold. We laid out the VELA program with the purpose of finding out whether we could improve technology and thereby reduce or eliminate that threshold. Now, we've eliminated the threshold first. Now we're using the technology to reduce the system. This might cause some questions and problems.<sup>37</sup> [*Unclear exchange.*]

**President Kennedy:** [*to Arthur Dean*] OK, well, now the second . . . what is the . . . what do you think . . . do you have an opinion of what you see as your problem in presenting this, and what you think would be the alternative ways of doing it?

**Dean:** I guess that I would hope that we would not start out with

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37. The test proved that the same level of detection could be accomplished with fewer total control stations, of which fewer needed to be on Soviet soil. This information, however, did nothing to alter criticisms of the original Geneva system. There was a threshold for the 1958 Geneva system below which no tests could be detected. McCone was making the point that the VELA tests did nothing to alter that threshold.

this atmospheric [*unclear*] treaty—underground and outer space—because on November 28 [1961] the Soviets proposed a ban in the atmosphere, plus a moratorium on underground. I would be very worried that they would maneuver us somehow, through India or [international] pressure, to take this atmospheric and then, instead of our being free to continue to test underground, I would be afraid that terrific opinion would be building up to make us agree to an uninspected, uncontrolled moratorium on underground [testing]. Now I know you're saying we won't,<sup>38</sup> but I simply say I think you've then given away your biggest asset. And that is, our ability to agree on bans in the atmosphere. That's basically [*unclear*].

I would be inclined to try this out on Zorin and make sure he'll say no on the on-site, then I could go before the plenary and say that we've tried to work this thing out, but we are prepared to lay out—without going into too much detail—we are prepared to discuss an internationally supervised system. So that gets away from the eight-nation memorandum, which relies entirely on nationally manned plus some additional systems by agreement.

I'd lay out that we do believe that we are prepared to sit down with the Soviets and try to make this a more effective system. And try to outline, without going into too much detail, just some of the things that we have discovered, but which I think we've got to be awfully careful about, as Mr. Lovett says, not to announce this as a scientific breakthrough. In that way, I think we could keep this discussion going and I think that we could prevent the Eight there from agreeing on some Swedish program that they might bring in.<sup>39</sup>

**President Kennedy:** What are you going to do about the British? Because they're going to be a bit more . . .<sup>40</sup>

**Dean:** Well, they're going to be quite a problem, because they're . . . Lord Home has been making some statements that in effect have called this a scientific breakthrough, and in answers . . . not in answers to questions, in statements in England. And the British told me before I just came over here, Godber, their minister, was there, that they are really in

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38. Stop underground testing.

39. The Eight are the eight nonaligned members of the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee—Brazil, Burma, Ethiopia, India, Mexico, Nigeria, Sweden, and the United Arab Republic.

40. The British, who were eager for a test ban agreement, would want to hear sweeter music from U.S. negotiators.

a very tough way, as far as the conservative party is concerned, and they're really looking for us to come back there with some sort of *major* thing that's going to help them out with their difficulties.<sup>41</sup> I think they're in so much difficulty that this isn't going to help them, but Godber, who's a very good fellow, told me that they really expected us to come back with some really major changes. [*Unclear background whispering.*] I think that these are . . . I think in all probability that you will have to, as soon as we agree on this, that you will have to explain this to Mr. [Harold] Macmillan personally, if—<sup>42</sup>

**President Kennedy:** Well, I'd like to ask Mr. Lovett if he believes, which I think we all would accept as solid, that the Soviets will not agree to on-site inspection, and if there is new information which reduces the number of events to a fourth, and when you have the British who have always wanted to go much further even before we understood the information, plus the neutrals . . .

What is wrong with us attempting, saying, putting forward these reduced figures at this time of the number of on-site inspections? By doing this, we would have demonstrated that we were bringing our position up to our technology. I don't think anybody . . . most people would think, whether we say six or seven or eight [on-site inspections], that it would be certainly sufficient restraint on the Soviet Union. They wouldn't really want to take this chance.<sup>43</sup> Why would we be in a better position to do that? Then the Soviet Union would then be sticking with its original position, and we at least would be in a much more protected negotiating position with the British who'll be out trying to gut us . . . as well as everyone else . . . without really losing anything. What is the reason not to do that [*unclear*]?

**Lovett:** I think there's one basic reason, and that is that the Soviets have consistently said they will permit *no* inspection, *no* verification of any sort. I read the quotation from Khrushchev which was two weeks ago. And [Andrei] Gromyko and Zorin have consistently taken his position. Now, if they say, "none at all" and then we go over there and then say, "Well, will you consider 10, 13, 20, 6?" . . . whatever it may be, it seems to me that they will continue to say no while we have given rather

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41. Joseph Godber was the British minister of state for foreign affairs (June 1961 to June 1963) and representative to the Geneva Conference.

42. British prime minister Harold Macmillan.

43. Probably take the chance that their cheating would be detected.

important evidence, in fact, that we are prepared even to abandon the verification and inspection, which at once runs into the problems of our phased general disarmament program, runs into the entire structure of our—

**President Kennedy:** If I may, no, excuse me, we would *reduce* the number, but we wouldn't give up the—

**Lovett:** Well, we would reduce the number. Then we've opened up a whole new area of problems, which is: What is the minimum number of verifications which would be appropriate?

**President Kennedy:** Well, up to now, we've said based on previous information which, as I understand the report, is four times as many events. We have said that we would go between 12 and 20. Now, let's say that the secretary, after looking at it, says that, based on the development of the art and so on, that we could detect our, that it would be too much of a risk to the Russians if we had six or seven or eight, let's say, whatever the figure might be, but at least then we have come forward with a new position based on new information, which isn't a breakthrough, but it's more sophisticated [*unclear*].

**Lovett:** Well, basically Mr. President, I think that's one man's position, one man's opinion, in an area in which there can be no exactitude at all. I don't think 12 or 20 carries any magic; but fundamentally, every time we withdraw from a position of an unquestioned principle, I think we weaken the principle itself.

**President Kennedy:** That's our own principle! After all, we did change from 20, to—

**Bundy:** Twelve.

**Lovett:** Twelve at this point, as I understand.

**Dean:** That's right sir. Yes, that's right.

**President Kennedy:** But at any rate, there's nothing sacred about 20 or 12, it really depends on how many events and what you consider constitutes a reasonable hazard to cheating.

**Lovett:** Well, I—

**President Kennedy:** Now let's say this new information tells us, without regard to negotiation, within this room, that six [inspections] presents the Russians with a [*unclear*] hazard and we are convinced they won't take any. Now, the question will really be whether for the next six months the United States ought to look like there is new information, and we haven't changed our position at all, and the cat really therefore will be on our backs. Or whether we say, "Well, based on the new information, here's where we'll go, and go no further" and the cat then is on the Russians' backs.

**Lovett:** Well, sir, I don't think we can shift the cat as easily as that. It seems to me that if we say to the Russians—this is an element of negotiations, Mr. President, that I'm talking about, not the generic problem. If they say we will consider no inspections, none at all, and we say, "Well, has the number got anything to do with it?"

**President Kennedy:** That's right.

**Lovett:** And they'd say, "Yes, the number's got something to do with it," then you'd have a reasonable opportunity to talk about it. But if they say, "No inspections at all," and they have consistently taken that, they say no self-respecting country would permit this, this seems to me it's an exercise in futility, and it becomes something of a gimmick in the public mind. And in the world.

**President Kennedy:** Well, let me put it a different way. Do you see any objection . . . We've talked about the question of reducing from 180 to this sort of—now, do you see any objection to Mr. Dean saying that, if the Russians were willing to negotiate this question seriously based on this new information we now have for the number of inspections, we'd be prepared to discuss it with them, and if there is a [*unclear*], to reduce the number of tests.<sup>44</sup> But until we know whether they're going to persist on . . . our getting into detailed discussions about the number if we are running [*unclear*]. Do you see anything wrong, in short, with him indicating that we would, once the Soviets had accepted the principle of international inspection, we would be prepared perhaps to change our [*unclear*]?

**Lovett:** I would think there would be nothing wrong with saying that we would discuss it, once they had agreed to the principle of inspection, because I don't know what the magic figure is, Mr. President.

**Unidentified:** [*Unclear*.]

**Dean:** Can I make a suggestion on our . . . ?

**President Kennedy:** Yeah.

**Dean:** They've always said that there are never more than 50 unidentified events in Soviet territory. Our formula—12 to 25—when we said there was a hundred. So we said, here's how [*unclear*] correct, then, on the basis of one to five, are . . . that we'll have.<sup>45</sup> If your signs are incorrect, then it's a maximum of 100, and we go up to 20. Now we might be able to say, "We're quite prepared, on the basis of these new calculations,

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44. On-site inspections.

45. The U.S. position was that it wished to investigate by on-site inspection one out of every five unexplained underground events in the Soviet Union.



to relate the number of on-site inspections in the Soviet Union to what we agree upon is the number of unidentified events on Soviet territory.”

Now, as I understand, under this new data, it's roughly 75, and so on the basis of one in five, that would be 15. Now this is really a political judgment. 12 is one a month. So I think—as all of the Eight keep saying to us all of the time, “you want to always have some give in your position”—I would think that we might put it into a formula relating it to the number of unidentified events, and then, perhaps, if we need to, depending upon your instruction, we might get down to somewhere around 10. But in the first instance, I should think it would make a very good impression if we were prepared to say that we would relate these on-site inspections to whatever the new data showed with respect to your number of unidentified events.<sup>46</sup>

**Rusk:** Mr. President, the—

**Bundy:** [*aside*] Do you agree with that? [*Unclear response.*]

**Rusk:** This problem runs into what Chip Bohlen is always talking about, of [*unclear*]. So long as the Soviets sit at zero, any figure that we could put in will be clipped sharply by the others [*someone agrees*] in an effort to get us to move nearer the Soviet position. Our move has got to be, and I think we can succeed in this, to get other people talking at the Russians about zero, rather than talking about a figure of whatever—

**President Kennedy:** But can we get them to do that though, Mr. Secretary, unless we have indicated some change in our . . .

**Rusk:** Well I think that that's probably incumbent upon us [*unclear*]. *Unclear exchange. Rusk is apparently asked a question to which he responded, “The last time we used this is . . .”*

**President Kennedy:** But I must say that if we say there are only 70—I'm not saying that that's all there are—but if there's only 70 and you're going to inspect one out of every five, I don't see that . . . The fact of the matter is that if you're inspecting one out of every ten, it isn't worth it to cheat.<sup>47</sup>

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46. What the group did not understand was that Kennedy had always understood this to be a political number, and there is evidence that the President was not concerned about the ratio between inspections and unexplained events. In May 1961, the President had Robert Kennedy offer Khrushchev a secret deal through Soviet intelligence officer Georgi Bolshakov for ten on-site inspections. This was long before the VELA tests reduced estimates of the number of unexplainable underground events each year in the Soviet Union (see Fursenko and Naftali, *“One Hell of a Gamble,”* p.113).

47. Number of unexplained underground events.

**Bundy:** Given the fact that 70 is [*unclear*] . . .

**President Kennedy:** I would hate to be doing something illegitimate and figure every tenth time there's going to be an inspection, because you wouldn't do it, it's too much of a risk, just by mathematical—

**Dean:** We could divide [*unclear*]. We could divide it one step further, if you wanted to, and that is to divide the number of inspections between your seismic areas and your off-seismic areas in the Soviet Union. Or your seismic areas entirely in Kamchatka, Kurile Islands, and this Kashmir region northeast of Afghanistan, the very heartland of Russia. As I understand it, that's a fairly hot seismic area.<sup>48</sup>

**President Kennedy:** There aren't that many . . . [*Unclear exchange.*]

**Bundy:** You could say that [*unclear*].

**Dean:** It might be nice to have a further degree of flexibility in dividing up your 12, or whatever your number is [*unclear*] between your seismic and your—

**President Kennedy:** We're not in disagreement here that if the Soviets actually said they'd come forward and start discussions, then we would take another look and figure what is the . . . gives us protection. All right, now we're only talking therefore, if they do change, how is it that we can keep the, as the Secretary suggests, the major heat on them, and not on our refusal—and with . . . the British, I know, are going to be at us—our refusal to equate our new information with a new position?

What phrases can Arthur Dean use that would indicate that we're prepared to take a new position without getting us into a lot of trouble before the time comes? I wouldn't mind having a fight with the Congress if it looked like you could really get an agreement, and get a treaty . . . Make that the initiative that would be worth a fight. But if we're not going to ever get that, there's no sense in having six months of being attacked by [Senator Henry "Scoop"] Jackson and others for giving away our position rather late in the game.

Now how can . . . it seems to me, therefore, it's just a question of how Arthur Dean can put this, so that the next six months it's more on the Russians than it is on us, and that we don't look like our position remains unchanged with the information which *is* changed. I just don't know what the phrase is that he's going to use. He's the one who has to carry the case. What can we say to him that he can say? Yeah.

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48. In earthquake zones the odds that an underground nuclear test might be mistaken for a seismic event are high.

**Vice President Johnson:** Could I read a couple of paragraphs here and make a limited comment? [*Unclear.*] [*The Vice President begins to read from draft language for the President's 4:00 P.M. press conference statement.*<sup>49</sup>]

Our new assessments give real promise that we can now work towards a system of detection and verification which would be substantially less large and cumbersome than the system which was contained in the treaty which we tabled in Geneva in April. Meanwhile, on the defense side, our new assessments do not affect the requirement that any system include adequate provision for on-site inspection of unidentified underground events. It is probable that if we can agree on an improved system, in the light of our very best assessment of the technical capabilities, there is no justification whatever for accepting the comprehensive treaty on the basis of present Soviet insistence that any inspection whatever [*unclear*].

**Bundy:** No inspection.

**Vice President Johnson:** [*continuing reading*]

We have been conducting a most careful and intensive review of our position with the object of bringing it squarely in line with technical realities. I must express the hope that the Soviet government, too, will reexamine its position on this matter of inspections. In the past it accepted the principle, and if it would return to its earlier position, we, for our part, will be able to engage in a more serious attempt to reach agreement on the relatively small number of on-site inspections which is essential.

Isn't that what you're saying?

**Dean:** Yes, sir.

**Vice President Johnson:** Now isn't that what you're saying? That keeps the [*unclear*] on-site inspections . . .

**Lovett:** . . . keeps the initiative with us.

**Vice President Johnson:** And, that's just a bare modification of the last page of your statement [*unclear*].

**Rusk:** See, the two essential points here for the President today:

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49. For the transcript of the President's news conference later that afternoon, including his statement regarding the test ban treaty, see *Public Papers of the Presidents*, pp. 560–98.

Recent tests have resulted in an improved capability to provide assurance through a simpler and less expensive arrangement. Secondly, we see no way to provide assurance without an adequate number of on-site inspections. So long as the Soviets say "No on-site inspections," we cannot be encouraged about the prospects of a test ban treaty. That's exactly what they're going to say. [*Voices of agreement.*]

**President Kennedy:** What is Arthur Dean going to do?

**Bundy:** [*Unclear*] on numbers until we get them on the [*unclear*].

**President Kennedy:** On what grounds?

**Bundy:** On the grounds—

**President Kennedy:** When they say to him, "Well is this . . . what do you believe this new data will permit you to agree upon?" What does he say in answer to that?

**Lovett:** That these are preliminary figures, Mr. President.

**President Kennedy:** Right.

**Lovett:** We've got to explore this and find out what is the proper number.

**Vice President Johnson:** And we're going to sit down and discuss it.

*Once again the discussion of firm numbers for a new Geneva verification system sets off an unclear exchange.*

**Bundy:** [*Unclear*] answer is if we [*unclear*] lower number, we couldn't agree around this table, whether it's three or—

**Rusk:** Mr. President, [*unclear*] accept, [*unclear*] India . . . Arthur Lall<sup>50</sup> [*unclear*]. I think we get Mr. Dean to go to them directly, in private and say, "Well now, on that question, there's no point in my negotiating that number with you, Mr. Ambassador. This is a problem between the United States and the Soviet Union. And so far, as the Soviets are saying zero, we're not in business. Now, if you can help us get the Soviets to talk about this, then all of us are in business here. But there's no point in my talking to you about a specific number—it'll be lower, I can tell you it'll be lower—but let's don't get into specific numbers, until the Russians—" <sup>51</sup> [*Rusk is cut off.*]

**President Kennedy:** If he can decide . . . Now, as long as . . . I just wanted to get the . . . He can say that it's going to be lower. It's going to . . . My judgment is, that's what he has to say. It's going to be lower.

**Dean:** I say lower. The 12 is related to the number of unidentified events. [*Unclear exchange.*] I'd like to be able to relate it so that [*unclear*].

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50. Arthur Lall was the Indian ambassador to the Geneva talks.

51. A strategy to use the Indians to help move the Soviets to accept some, any on-site inspections.

[*Unclear exchange.*] I don't want it to pass lower than 12 [on-site inspections], that's my problem.

**Rusk:** "Lower, in the light of improved capabilities."

**President Kennedy:** Well, it may be lower than 12.<sup>52</sup>

**Dean:** Lower than 12, I'm sure its going to be, but in the first instance I would like to have the negotiating [room] because I don't— [*unclear exchange*].

**President Kennedy:** I want to make sure that we're not sending you out without even a shirt on. [*Laughter.*] Do you feel that you've got enough to? I don't think that we ought to . . . I think the heat ought to be on them.

**Dean:** I think [*unclear*].

**President Kennedy:** We ought to give you as much as we can [*unclear*].

**Dean:** If you'd allow me to relate it to the scientific data on it, I think I've got the negotiating ability to [*unclear*], but I need—

**McCloy:** One thing that I don't like about the Vice President's and yours, Mr. Dean, is the fact that we don't see how we can give up the . . . I think we ought to be more aggressive, be more crystallized in [*unclear*] on-site inspections, because I think, as I say, it's not only related to the test ban and the probability of getting a test ban, but it relates to the whole probability of getting off this [*unclear*] . . .

**Bundy:** Well, you can make that argument if you want . . .

**President Kennedy:** I think we ought to restate at the beginning what this information is. I mean everybody's got a . . . at least generally what it has indicated, based on the early July, or whatever it is . . . but indicate the somewhat tentative nature, but it does encourage us.<sup>53</sup>

**Bundy:** [*Unclear.*]

**President Kennedy:** Whatever the phrase, at least restate what the data is, because everybody's got entirely different ideas of what it is, the data. The fact of the matter is even with the most optimistic view of the new data, there is still a great . . . this threshold is different than . . . the number of events is still substantial.

**Bundy:** The basic point is—

**President Kennedy:** And then go on to say along the lines of what Mr. Vice President read there, and let's give him [Dean] the general American position this afternoon rather than continuing to have his [*unclear*] [*unclear interjections*] about international inspection, about

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52. Kennedy once again showed he is not stuck on any particular set of numbers. He wanted a treaty.

53. "Early July" was the 7 July 1962 Pentagon statement about the results of the VELA tests.

nationally manned [control stations], about using the phrase we used before about internationally—

**Bundy:** . . . internationally supervised . . .

**President Kennedy:** —and whatever, supervised, and that would just have to be a negotiating matter as to what . . . Senator Russell would be satisfied as long as we use that phrase. [*Unclear.*]

**Lovett:** Don't we want to deal, Mr. President, also, to try to strike down this big scientific breakthrough—

**President Kennedy:** Yeah. [*Unclear background discussion.*]

**Lovett:** Saying that there *is* no scientific breakthrough. We had [*unclear*], Romney, Norton, the whole thing.<sup>54</sup>

**Bundy:** [*Unclear*] very important point.

**President Kennedy:** How do they describe it, then? [*Unclear exchange.*]

**Lovett:** Well, this . . . the sort of language that . . . in answer to a question on the Hill, was that Dr. [Jerome] Wiesner says, "There is no clear way of identifying a nuclear explosion without looking at the spot itself." Then Senator [John O.] Pastore says, "Then there has to be on-the-spot inspections." Then Arthur Dean said, "Yes, that is right." This morning under questioning he confirmed, as did the others . . . to my question, "Do you regard this as a scientific breakthrough," they all said no, they did not.

**Bundy:** It's only a word. I don't myself think we ought to get into this word, what is and isn't a *breakthrough*. Anything that reduces by a factor of three the requirements of the system is a very substantial change. [*Chuckles.*]

**President Kennedy:** [*to Lovett*] Did they say that to you?

**Lovett:** [*Unclear.*] Yes, sir.

**President Kennedy:** They [*unclear*] . . .

**Lovett:** [*Unclear.*] We were all there. They said that there is no scientific breakthrough.

**President Kennedy:** But that there is a factor of . . . did they . . .

**Lovett:** No sir, they didn't say anything about that.

**President Kennedy:** What did they say to you as far as the improvement of this system, of their detecting?

**Lovett:** They said that they would substantially reduce the number of—

**Unidentified:** Suspicious events.

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54. Dr. Carl Romney was a member of the Air Force Technical Application Center (AFTAC); Norton was general counsel of the Department of Defense.

**Lovett:** Suspicious events.

**Rusk:** [*Unclear*.] You said at the beginning, Mr. President, that the results of the VELA tests have in essence done two things: One, they make it possible to reduce the number of so-called suspicious events. And secondly, to increase advantageously the range of estimates taken. [*Unclear exchange between Rusk and Lovett.*]

**McCloy:** The point is then, they have not changed the bottom-line identification. . . .

**Unidentified:** That's right, that's right.

**McCone:** Well, the point here is that they've discovered an error in the transposition in the Richter scale. [*Unclear*] factor of 3 or  $2\frac{1}{2}$ , in reduction of the number of [unexplained] events, of course, is not due to the improvement of—

**Lovett:** This is no scientific breakthrough.

**McCone:** —technology, it's just that they found that a conversion factor was [*unclear*]—

**Bundy:** Well, I don't think you really ought to say, [*unclear interjection by Lovett*] "no scientific breakthrough." That's a word game. To understand your figures better by this amount is very, very important.

**Lovett:** Well, the figures on the thermometer are no longer the same.

**Bundy:** Yeah, that's right.

**Lovett:** We agreed this morning that the patient hasn't got a fever of 106. It's the same patient. He's just as sick as he was before, but it's only reading 102. And that's all that's happened.

*Unclear exchange. Bundy can be heard saying, "The reason it's very different."*

**President Kennedy:** Tell me that value again.

**Lovett:** The Richter system, as it was worked out in 1935 based on a list of earthquakes, has now been proved by advanced techniques, improved science, and that sort of thing, as I understand it, to be incorrect. So they've got to revise the yardstick by which things are measured. That is one of the problems that produces this [*unclear*].

**Bundy:** That's the primary reason. I agree.

**Lovett:** This is not a scientific breakthrough, in my opinion. It is a correction of a scientific mistake.

**Rusk:** I wouldn't attach the word *breakthrough*, because most breakthroughs are—

**Bundy:** Are like that. [*Unclear exchange and laughter.*]

**McCloy:** [*Unclear*] saying it's a breakthrough abroad.

**Unidentified:** There you are.

**Foster:** They extrapolated from large events to indicate that there would be a lot more events. When they actually checked the events, there weren't so many. Now, this is a difference, Bob, because you're measuring against fewer events. Now, this is literally a true change because if the thermometer says 106 [*unclear comment by Bundy*], you feel badly. Actually it isn't the thermometer being up there. . . . The thermometer was down where it says "you're at 94 and you feel pretty good."

**Lovett:** But you still feel badly.

**Fisher:** We just [*unclear*] a number of earthquakes.

**Foster:** Because you've counted these earthquakes, and this is the basis of the present number.

**President Kennedy:** May I ask you, what are the British drawing from the same information as we've got? Why do they draw a different conclusion?

**Foster:** They draw the conclusion that we can detect a lot better than we could. And this is true to some extent. And they also draw the same conclusion that detecting against a less fuzzy background, you can identify better. Now, this is not true, you can't identify better—[*Unclear background discussion.*]

**Bundy:** Mr. President, they wanted you to go with a nationally controlled system beforehand. Their desire for this is obviously reinforced by this new assessment.

**President Kennedy:** But they still claim that national inspection is necessary?

**Bundy:** They still agree that on-site inspection is necessary.

**President Kennedy:** Well, I think we've got to get this statement going. What is our schedule now, as far as, are we going to meet this afternoon?<sup>55</sup>

**Bundy:** We had a meeting scheduled for quarter to five, Mr. President.

**President Kennedy:** I'm not sure at this point—

**Bundy:** It's on the record, and it'll be a little difficult to cancel it now.

**President Kennedy:** Well, it's just a question of when do you go back to New York?

**McCloy:** Nine.

**President Kennedy:** Do you want to come? Can you come at a quarter to five? And number two, I wonder if there's some way we could read you this statement when we get it done.

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55. The President had planned to meet later with his full test-ban team to formalize the instructions for Dean.



**Bundy:** We can . . . [ *to Lovett*] Unless you're all tied up this afternoon, we'll hunt you up or you can come and join us when we have a draft.

**Lovett:** I have an appointment [ *unclear*].

**President Kennedy:** [ *Unclear*.]

**Dean:** Could I make just one comment on your draft. I hope in relation to this scientific data, [ *unclear*] when we reported this decoupling event in '59, the Soviets said we were wrong.<sup>56</sup> Because they said that the number of earthquakes in the Soviet Union was somewhere around 50 to 60. I hope we don't . . . I know that I'm going to be faced with the matter of debating with the Soviets that they're now going to say, "Well, you've held up this nuclear test ban since '59, [ *unclear*]." You want to be a little bit careful about the way we word this.

**Bundy:** Got any advice?

**Dean:** Huh? Huh?

**Bundy:** How do we . . . What do we say? Arthur Dean was crazy? Or is there some better way out?

**Dean:** Oh, I was crazy, but I wasn't there in '59. [ *Laughter*.]

**President Kennedy:** Well, if they were right, [ *unclear*] right for the wrong reason, why is that?

**Foster:** Well, they didn't mention their own earthquakes [ *unclear*] because they were mere [ *unclear*]. We were doing it by calculating the curve, and we estimated that we had this many. The reason for this is we now have a better detection procedure. This is the real reason.

**Lovett:** Bill, isn't that a beautiful argument, to say they could measure it because they were on the spot for the test [ *unclear*]?

**Bundy:** Yeah.

**Foster:** I believe this is, again, the problem of secrecy. If they open up their society, these misapprehensions will not develop.

**Lovett:** Mr. President, you expressed some concern as to why the Russians might be stupid enough—I don't think you used that word—to take a chance on it being caught, with their foot off base.

**President Kennedy:** Yeah.

**Lovett:** I don't know the reason, but I think the element that makes it less abhorrent to them is a complete absence of conscience, and of embarrassment. They're not embarrassed by being caught off base. In

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56. Decoupling is a technique employed to drastically reduce the strength of the shockwaves emitted by a nuclear explosion, and thereby the chances of detection, by conducting the test in a large underground chamber.

fact, they regard that as an accomplishment. I think the feeling which you have on that score shouldn't weigh too much into trying to measure "why would they do a stupid thing like this and get caught?" They don't mind getting caught at all, sir.

**President Kennedy:** Well, let me say that I, what I, you have to put so many things into the equation, or into the machine, the computer. You have to put what they could hope to accomplish scientifically by cheating, how much embarrassment they would suffer from being caught, what the chances are of your catching them, what the risk would be to us if both of us continue with the present system of testing, those dangers they would bring, help keep their . . . make these weapons and so on. So I think you'd have to put all that into the machine, and then you'd get an answer which everybody would interpret differently, but which I would interpret as a . . .

Depending on how much significant progress they could make by cheating. Let's just assume they would cheat—I'm ready to accept that—let's assume they would cheat and take the chance of getting caught. In the first place, I think one in five, they're going to give you a factor mathematically.<sup>57</sup>

**Bundy:** Well, Mr. President, bear in mind that their cheating would go on underneath the threshold, and you wouldn't have an inspection, so you won't see a suspicious event . . .

**Lovett:** Yes sir, that's the point. That's the point.

**President Kennedy:** That's right. So that you'd have no suspicious event, and you'd have to make a judgment as to how much ground, compared to what we've been through in our laboratories, how much ground they could gain by cheating, assuming they had [tested illegally], below the threshold, over a period of years, compared to the danger to us of a constant testing and an increase in weapon technology of other countries who do not now possess it. I think that would be the formula.

I think one trouble is that we and the joint committee look too much at the Soviet gains and less at the danger to us of other national [nuclear] deterrents arising.<sup>58</sup> Now what do you . . . what is your view of that?<sup>59</sup> That doesn't bother you?

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57. One on-site inspection for every five suspicious underground events.

58. Joint Committee on Atomic Energy.

59. The President rephrased his basic argument for a test-ban treaty.

**Lovett:** I don't have that feeling, Mr. President. I think we . . . it may be a fact that we look too much at the Soviet gains, but we've consistently underestimated their competence over a period of years.<sup>60</sup> And the ones which led the underestimates were the scientists, who said it would take them ten years to catch us. I think that the only measure we have of our own position here is our potential enemy. And this would not really bother me, sir.

**President Kennedy:** If other countries have possession of this . . .

**Lovett:** Oh yes, I wouldn't want to see [nuclear] proliferation. But I think that's a separate problem which would not be controlled by this test ban.

**President Kennedy:** Test ban.

**Rusk:** Well, we should work on that simultaneously as a separate matter.

**Lovett:** I think it's a separate matter, sir.

*By fundamentally rejecting the President's motivations for a test ban, Robert Lovett put the President on the defensive.*

**President Kennedy:** Well I think that, well I would . . . it would seem to me that the test ban might lessen the chance of proliferation. If that weren't so, then I agree. I don't know what good the test ban really is, except [an] atmospheric test ban might be in some day useful to [unclear] radioactive.<sup>61</sup> [*Unclear interjection.*]

**Roswell Gilpatric:** I think a ban, an agreement between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A., would have a very strong deterrent effect on them.

**Lovett:** I think it would have a certain deterrent effect, Ros. I don't think it's in the order of magnitude that the Army paper, the military paper shows, which rather offers it as an inducement for the ban.<sup>62</sup> I don't think it is. I think it's a potential benefit to get a ban [unclear] perhaps, but I don't think you can say that if you get this test ban, you're not going

60. The United States underestimated the speed with which the Soviets would develop a nuclear bomb. In the mid- to late 1950s, however, the United States exaggerated the growth of the Soviet nuclear arsenal.

61. The President was referring to public concerns that nuclear testing releases strontium 90 and other harmful radioactive elements into the atmosphere.

62. This is probably a reference to "The U.S.-U.S.S.R. Military Balance with and without a Test Ban Agreement," a document introduced by Paul Nitze at the 30 July test-ban meeting. Given to the President by McGeorge Bundy on 30 July 1962 to prepare for the earlier meeting, it has not been declassified as of August 2000. See Bundy, "Agenda for 5 P.M. Meeting Today," 30 July 1962, "ACDA, Disarmament, General, 7/29/62-7/31/62" folder, Departments and Agencies Files, National Security Files, John F. Kennedy Library.

to have proliferation. I don't think the Chicoms [Chinese Communists] or any [*unclear*]. I'm not sure it follows.

**Theodore Sorensen:** . . . work simultaneously toward the . . .

**Unidentified:** [*Unclear*.]

**Lovett:** You have to deal with it as a separate problem but simultaneously handle it.

**President Kennedy:** I think the one question which we're now in [*unclear*] is the question of whether we want the atmospheric test ban itself. [*Unclear exchange*.]

**Bundy:** I don't think you need it.<sup>63</sup> It's not relevant to your press conference.

**President Kennedy:** No, I meant, it seems to me at 4:45 we ought to come back to that.

**Sorensen:** [*Unclear*.]

**Unidentified:** You need a fallback, I think, Mr. President.

**President Kennedy:** Good. Well now, where could we establish to have this paper reviewed?<sup>64</sup>

**Bundy:** Well, Ted will be working on the paper. I'll give him all the data, and then, when he has a draft, we can have a discussion of it.

**President Kennedy:** Except they'll want . . .

**Unidentified:** [*Unclear*.]

**Bundy:** Well, I think we should all come back . . . 2:30?

**President Kennedy:** How about 2:30?

**Bundy:** Three o'clock? Or 2:30, what do you think?

**Unidentified:** Three o'clock.

**Sorensen:** What time is the press conference? Four?

**Several Voices:** Four.

**Sorensen:** Well, in that case then, we'd better make it 2:30.

**President Kennedy:** 2:30.

**Bundy:** Sounds good.

*Meeting adjourned. Small unintelligible side conversations began. Dean said, "I've been trying to get him, but he's traveling up in the country somewhere, but . . ." After five minutes of indistinct banter, the President is overheard preparing for his press conference. He asked for information about the status of the Satellite Bill that was being filibustered in Congress.*

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63. Need to have that answered now.

64. The President's 4:00 P.M. statement.

**President Kennedy:** Pierre, what about that satellite thing? Do you want to give me a brief, and I'll read it before? [*Unclear*] . . .

**Unidentified:** Yeah.

**Unidentified:** I'll tell you why.

*The President said, "Dean would be good," and then was pulled to one side for a small chat.*

**Dean:** Have you got just a second?

**President Kennedy:** Yeah, sure.

*Their conversation is unintelligible.*

**McCone:** [*Unclear.*]

**Bundy:** Well, I think we're getting there.

**McCone:** [*Unclear.*]

**Bundy:** That's going to be quite different when we get to it. I know the Vice President has been working on it and [*unclear*].

**Murrow:** This is the key issue. Are you going to use the word *internationally operated*, or are you just going to use —

**Bundy:** No, we are not. I think we say *internationally supervised*.

**Unidentified:** *Internationally* is not the word I want for *operated*.

**Bundy:** So it's [*unclear*].

**Murrow:** All right. That's fine.

**Bundy:** I don't think.

**Murrow:** Well—

**Bundy:** We were going to decide that at 2:30 . . . make it clear that *internationally*—

**Murrow:** Right, well I shouldn't . . . well I can say it may be clear it's going to be internationally supervised [*unclear*].

**Bundy:** [*Unclear*] to discuss.

**Murrow:** Right.

**Bundy:** And all under [*unclear*].

**Unidentified:** Pardon?

**Bundy:** All under the [*unclear*]. They move for zero inspections.

**Unidentified:** Yes.

**Unidentified:** [*Unclear*] I was . . . Senator [*unclear*] how come the thing blew up so badly in the island?<sup>65</sup> That seemed to be in his mind.

**McCone:** Oh yeah, he asked all about it. And I don't know what the hell happened to this last one, do you?

**Unidentified:** No.

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65. On 25 July 1962 a Thor missile carrying a nuclear device as part of the DOMINIC test series exploded on Johnston Island, destroying one of the launch pads.

**McCone:** Huh?

**Unidentified:** Looks like—

**McCone:** [*Unclear.*] The first two . . . the scientists [*unclear*] to get their [*unclear*] gadgets on them.

**Unidentified:** This is through them all.

**McCone:** Through them all. What happened with this last one, I don't know.

**President Kennedy:** Let's get that clear. Now . . .

**Rusk:** [*Unclear.*]

**Dean:** Well, the first one was scrubbed because the Navy ship didn't get a fix on it. I think it was successful, but then the Navy ship worried that they hadn't got a fix on it. So they scrubbed it.

**Unidentified:** [*Unclear.*] [*Rusk can be heard in the background mentioning Russia.*]

**Dean:** [*Unclear*] the first one. The second one was lopsided. The first one was a success.

**Unidentified:** [*Unclear*] had nothing to do with it.

**Unidentified:** First [one] was a success.

**Dean:** I think we need more elevation of morale among the scientists. Of course, they had to [*unclear*] because one ship hadn't got a fix.

**Unidentified:** Yeah.

*McCone wanted to make a telephone call.*

**Unidentified:** Well I think if the Secretary goes . . .

**McCone:** Have you got a line for me?

**Unidentified:** Yes, I [will] go out. . . . I think I'm going to try to make a date with the Attorney General. This was 2:30 wasn't it?

**Unidentified:** Yeah.

**Unidentified:** [*Unclear.*]

**Unidentified:** I'll keep my eye on it.

**Unidentified:** I'll know just exactly who took them. [*Unclear exchange.*]

*As McCone waited for his line, Rusk was organizing the preparation of the President's statement for the press conference at the State Department.*

**Unidentified:** Mr. Secretary, can I get you a ride?

**Rusk:** Yeah. Let's work on the statement now, we're coming back at 2:30; Thompson's got it [*unclear*].<sup>66</sup>

**Unidentified:** We're coming back.

*The Secretary of State is ready to leave. Unclear exchange.*

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66. Llewellyn Thompson was U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union.

**Unidentified:** Can I give you a lift?

**Dean:** Yeah, thank you.

*Some salutations are heard. Two speakers were talking about Douglas Dillon and Robert McNamara: "Secretary of the Treasury, that's understandable; Yeah, that's interesting. This is the Secretary of Defense's view."*

**McCone:** [*on the telephone*] Yeah. All right, get him there. Hello? Hello? Hello? [*Pause.*] Walter, I'm going out to the house for lunch with Mr. Lovett and Mr. McCloy.<sup>67</sup> I asked Sherman Kent<sup>68</sup> to round up some people that could talk to Mr. McCloy on this Russian oil problem.<sup>69</sup> Have you found out what he's got prepared and give me a call up at the house? I'll be there in a few minutes. OK, anything new? Yeah, yeah, yeah. And, we'll be in contact [*unclear*]. OK. [*Unclear.*]

*McCone hung up. There was some closing banter with McCloy and Lovett before their car arrived. Someone mentioned work the previous night that took three and a half hours. "It gave it a little advance." To which either Lovett or McCloy responded, "Gave it the whole works." After they left, an unidentified speaker decided he needed a little food, "Maybe I'll get myself a little piece of candy," and chuckled.*

**Unidentified:** Did somebody say about the, got to keep the [*unclear*] business up?

**McCloy:** Well, like I said, it's in Mac Bundy's [*office*].

**Unidentified:** No it isn't. He took it with him. I think I told you [*unclear*]. Come on let's go.

*The remaining people left the room. After a little over a minute of silence, the recorder picked up the sounds of someone, probably Evelyn Lincoln, switching off the machine.*

President Kennedy went for his prelunch swim, then returned to his private quarters. At 2:30 P.M. his advisers gathered to rework the Vice President's draft of the test ban statement for the 4:00 P.M. press conference. The phrase "internationally supervised," which Kennedy believed Senator Richard Russell and the other arms control skeptics on the Hill might be willing to swallow, was added to describe an acceptable verification system to police a test ban. There was nothing added to reflect

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67. Probably Walter Elder, John McCone's assistant.

68. Sherman Kent was head of the Office of National Estimates, 1951 to 1968.

69. McCloy had long been an intermediary between large oil companies and the government.

the President's readiness to reduce the number of control posts from 180 to something less than a hundred or to reveal his flexibility on the number of mandatory on-site inspections.

At 3:47 P.M. President Kennedy left for the State Department auditorium, the venue for the press conference. Minutes later he delivered the written statement but in response to a question about what "internationally supervised" meant in the context of the proposed Geneva verification system, he went further than his advisers expected. He spoke of "national control posts . . . internationally monitored or supervised."<sup>70</sup> The United States had never accepted national control posts. The official position was that these monitoring stations should be manned by an international scientific team. Whether he intended to or not at that particular moment, President Kennedy had suggested some new flexibility.

When his test ban policy group reconvened at the White House after the press conference, the President would be somewhat on the defensive. Former defense secretary Robert Lovett had cautioned him in the morning that the test ban talks were not a negotiation but "a phase of the cold war." There would be others around the table who expressed a concern that the United States not appear too willing to get an agreement. President Kennedy's challenge was to mollify the unpersuaded while still providing his negotiator, Ambassador Arthur Dean, with something useful to say in Geneva.

4:45–5:32 P.M.

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*What is the statement we made in the statement itself?*

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### **Meeting on Nuclear Test Ban<sup>71</sup>**

At 4:45 P.M., the test ban meeting begun in the morning was reconvened, this time with a larger group in attendance. This would be the last meeting to establish Ambassador Arthur Dean's negotiating instructions before he returned to Geneva.

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70. *The Kennedy Presidential Press Conferences* (New York: Coleman, 1978), pp. 356–57.

71. Including President Kennedy, Arthur Dean, William Foster, Leland Haworth, Carl Kaysen, Lyman Lemnitzer, Franklin Long, Robert Lovett, John McCloy, John McCone, Robert McNamara, Edward Murrow, Paul Nitze, Dean Rusk, Glenn Seaborg, and Jerome Wiesner. Tape 5, John F. Kennedy Library, President's Office Files, Presidential Recordings Collection.



The first part of the meeting was not recorded. President Kennedy began taping as he read aloud British prime minister Harold Macmillan's reply to his cable on U.S. strategy in the test ban negotiations. He had stressed to the British leader that, though he wanted a comprehensive test ban, he would accept an atmospheric test ban as a first step. The President also requested the right to use Christmas Island for U.S. nuclear tests. This request was very much a part of Kennedy's efforts to prepare seriously for the possibility of a test ban agreement. Administration experts on nuclear testing had cautioned the President that one of the dangers of an atmospheric test ban would be that the United States would make itself vulnerable to a sudden Soviet abrogation of the agreement by allowing U.S. nuclear facilities and laboratories to erode during the period the treaty was observed. The British facility on Christmas Island, in their view, was insurance against a Soviet violation of the ban.<sup>72</sup> Macmillan wrote to say the British would allow the United States to use Christmas Island now and, in the event a test ban treaty were signed, would keep the facility in good working order, just in case it were later needed. Macmillan also cautioned that the British preferred to push for a comprehensive ban, though President Kennedy's proposed first step would be acceptable.<sup>73</sup>

The sound quality in the first ten minutes of this tape is especially poor.

**President Kennedy:** [*reading from Macmillan's letter, received by the White House*]

... tests if they tried to cheat. However, I quite realize that you do not entirely share this view. And anyway, Congress would not accept it, at least at the moment. So I agree that there would now be advantage in offering both the atmospheric ban, as you suggest and also a comprehensive treaty which at this stage would not need to specify the exact number of inspections.

I am looking into the question of Christmas Island, but I should

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72. Gerald W. Johnson, Assistant to the Secretary of Defense (Atomic Energy) and Leland J. Haworth, Commissioner, Atomic Energy Commission, "Memorandum on Maintaining Readiness To Test During a Test Ban," 29 July 1962, National Security Files, Departments and Agencies: ACDA, Disarmament, General, 7/29/62-7/31/62, Box 256, John F. Kennedy Library.

73. Department of State, Presidential Correspondence: Lot 66 D 204, M-K, 1961-1962, National Archives II.

think that we would not find it too difficult to keep the installations on a care and maintenance basis, as indeed we have been doing in recent years. I am looking into this further and if the treaties were tabled, we would certainly consider doing as you suggest. Of course, the question of reactivating Christmas Island in the event of the Russians cheating, would have to be discussed between the United States and British Governments of the day.

I have not discussed your letter with anyone (except David Gore who is here on leave and with Alec Home.) So these are just my personal thoughts.

Well, I think the main point is . . . if we just could get Christmas Island for just the time being, I think he thinks we are going to table it. He's talking about our tabling the comprehensive, so, if we're not going ahead with the [*unclear exchange*].

**McGeorge Bundy:** [*Unclear*] would be, Mr. President [*unclear*].

**President Kennedy:** Now, in the first place, let's say, what we would . . . what is going to be our response on this [*unclear*] concept of an atmospheric test ban as of a certain date?

**Bundy:** Could I interrupt for one second, Mr. President.

**President Kennedy:** Yeah.

**Bundy:** Pierre [Salinger] is getting pressure from the press already as to whether we are now, whether your statement at the press conference means that we are . . . a sign that your position is that we would accept "internationally supervised, national control posts."

**Unidentified:** [*Unclear*.]

**President Kennedy:** [*Unclear*.] What did I say?

**Bundy:** That's what we agreed on in the text [of the statement].

**President Kennedy:** [*Unclear*.]

**Dean Rusk:** I believe we did say "internationally supervised, national control posts."

**Unidentified:** "Internationally supervised, national control posts."

**President Kennedy:** Well, does that mean the international corps of supervisors [*unclear*]? These are the things that Mr. [Arthur] Dean is going to discuss.

**Bundy:** The details are not . . . you don't need to give them to Pierre in the next hour. You have to work out the full background on that to get the [*unclear*].

**President Kennedy:** What is the statement we made in the statement itself?

**Bundy:** In the written statement, there was nothing on this except

that [unclear] said that an internationally monitored system of control would be [unclear].

**President Kennedy:** Well, I've always thought [unclear] was meaningless.

**Unidentified:** [Unclear] very closely.

**Robert McNamara:** Well, exactly. [*Laughter.*]

**President Kennedy:** And therefore in a paradoxical . . . So that I . . . It seems to me the important point is that [unclear] internationally monitored. So, in effect, that's what Mr. Dean has had to set out. But I think that. . . Now, what we have to go into is how does this differ from our previous . . . what is the phrase we used before in the treaty in the [unclear] about the monitoring stations?

**Arthur Dean:** "Under effective international controls."

**President Kennedy:** This is "under effective international control." Is that the phrase, was it? Now, do you want somebody else with a [unclear]? Did somebody ask you about [unclear]?

**Bundy:** If we can wait till six. We can stick on this point.

**President Kennedy:** I believe the important point for Pierre is just to say in the present language—Repeat that language, would you?

**Dean:** "Under effective international controls."

**President Kennedy:** We're talking about restraint, not controls.

**Bundy:** That's exactly that because in the end we may want to negotiate a separate statement on controls.

**President Kennedy:** I think that . . . can't he say that what we want are control posts, which are effectively—

**Bundy:** Under effective international supervision.

**President Kennedy:** Now, if he starts to ask you about how this compares with our treaty, just say, "This is a matter Mr. Dean is discussing"; [*background whispering*] but the important point is, we have not accepted the concept of national control posts, solely. We're talking about internationally supervised for the national control posts. [*Laughter.*] All right?

**Rusk:** The paragraph A on page 3 gives a summary of terms under a comprehensive test ban and [unclear] give Mr. Dean a chance to find out whether there's any possibility of us moving on a comprehensive treaty. It would mean that we would not get into detailed numbers, [unclear] a real response from the Soviet Union, although we would have to indicate informally and privately to a number of delegations that the numbers would be smaller than those we talked about in the [draft] treaties that have been tabled.

We had an understanding among ourselves of the approximate num-

bers we would be willing to discuss, at such time as the Soviet position made it possible to discuss it. There would be five national stations on the Soviet Union with a neutral observer present, in the range in which we talk about on-site inspections.

But I think the key question we think . . . we really ought to think about this afternoon is what we do if there is a sentiment in Geneva to move on the atmospheric [test ban]. And my own personal belief, subject to Mr. Dean's negotiating needs, would be that we're prepared to move on that rapidly, subject to the point at the bottom of the page, that if the Soviets continue an extended series, and we find it necessary for security reasons to conduct an additional series, we would not then enter into an arrangement with [unclear].

**President Kennedy:** Couldn't we put it in a . . . Either we would accept it immediately—

**Rusk:** Yeah.

**President Kennedy:** —the atmospheric test ban, and therefore we wouldn't do any more of our tests and they would call off theirs, which obviously they won't do. But otherwise, that we should agree on a date, to give us time to test again, if we decided that we needed to after this series of tests. So it would either be September 1, for example, or June 1. By then we would be able to test again if we wanted to, but we would still have agreed to a cutoff date.

**Rusk:** I think this. . . . From a political point of view, that would be . . . [unclear] dramatic about it on the part of . . . from the point of view of our test people, and at Defense they would [unclear].

**Glenn Seaborg:** It would . . . should be quite acceptable from the [unclear] AEC standpoint and I think Mr. McNamara should speak to the [unclear].

**McNamara:** It would be quite acceptable from our position also.

**William Foster:** This has been suggested by Padilla Nervo, in fact.<sup>74</sup>

**President Kennedy:** He accepted a different . . . He has different dates, doesn't he?

**Foster:** Yeah, he was flexible on the dates. He wanted a date that would be acceptable [unclear].

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74. Luis Padilla Nervo, Mexican representative to the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee, proposed in June 1962 that there be a time-lapse between the signing and the coming into force of a treaty. He suggested an end date for atmospheric testing of January 1963. London supported the proposal.

**Bundy:** Is he fixing a date now? Or do we know?

**Foster:** No, we're working on that because we discussed [*unclear*].

**Rusk:** The earlier the date, the better from a political point of view, in terms of negotiation. June 1 sounds a little distant. I gather that they expect to finish their series by the end of October. We hesitate to accept a much earlier date than June 1 . . .

**Bundy:** Well, we prefer not to decide that now, Mr. Secretary. What we really ought to do is to see what they're doing.

**President Kennedy:** Well, but you don't need to have . . . If we get a chance to get an atmospheric test ban, don't we . . . providing we have sufficient time to . . . We don't want to have it [*unclear*] a chance lost . . .

**Unidentified:** [*Unclear*.]

**Bundy:** But we don't today have to say what [*unclear*] would be.

**Robert Lovett:** My guess would be that if their series calls for a specific response on our part, it would be in the length of the test period rather than the length of the—

**Jerome Wiesner:** Yes, the high-altitude area.

**McNamara:** I think that's right.

**Foster:** [*Unclear*.]

**McNamara:** Certainly today we wouldn't want to decide on a date earlier than June.

**Bundy:** Yeah, that's right.

**Foster:** Today we wouldn't want to set—

**McNamara:** We would not.

**President Kennedy:** Now does Mr. Dean . . . should he . . . should his response be when he arrives there be favorable to this?

**Dean:** I personally think we're getting into a Soviet trap on this atmospheric test ban, and I don't like to differ with the Secretary, but last November they said that they wanted an atmospheric test ban plus a moratorium on all further underground testing. I think they're going to try to wangle the Eight to make this proposal on atmospheric testing, and I think they'll play around with that in an effort to try to put the heat on us, after we've made the atmospheric proposal; then I think we've lost our most important weapon.

I don't believe you're going to be able to get a continuation of underground testing even though you make your atmospheric test ban. I think you've given up your most important negotiating position. And then I think world opinion would put terrific pressure upon us to agree not to do any further underground tests. You've got a moratorium pending the working out of your controls. Then, I think you've given away all your negotiating position if you offered an atmospheric test ban, I think.

**President Kennedy:** Let me just say that I don't find any [*unclear*] to a reasonably [*unclear*] responsibility [*unclear*]. I don't find the slightest pressure to desist from underground testing, as a moratorium or on a unilateral basis without inspection. I think that everybody in the world says we should. We should either . . . in fact, I think there isn't the slightest inclination, and I don't even feel that they could ever put any real pressure on us. That's number one.

Number two, for us to put a hold on an atmospheric test ban, providing we have sufficient time to test again if we need it, I think does put up in the air our whole capacity on this issue. Then we really look like we're just wild about this. And I think that militarily, though we may wait, providing we have a chance at another go, until you make it necessary, everybody is better off together, if that's all we're going to get.

**Rusk:** Mr. President, I think that the thing Mr. Dean will need to get a little comfort on this is for him to know that we see that trap lying there, and we just are determined not to step in it. But if he is told that we are not going to be pressured into a moratorium on underground testing—

**Lovett:** Why can't we say no?

**Rusk:** Then let's cancel the trap so we won't put our foot in it.

**John McCloy:** As a precondition, why don't you say that "you know that we're ready to accept an atmospheric test ban, but we want you to be aware that we're not going to go into this moratorium dance"? [*Unclear exchange.*]

**Dean:** I think we ought to make it very clear, if we do decide to accept the atmospheric test ban, that they're not under any circumstances going to get in any further unpoliced moratorium underground. [*Unclear exchange.*]

**President Kennedy:** So, in other words, then, Mr. Dean will see that the response to this thing, for the reasons they . . . I think that it's possible then, if . . . they may try to pull away by opposing what they [*unclear*] before. Anyway [*unclear*]. Then there's the question to come on the date. Do we have to say, "Oh, if it's done immediately," because they want nuclear tests, otherwise we have to make sure we've got enough room at the other end?

**Dean:** Padilla Nervo suggested January 1, '63. And his proposal, at least that's what we have [*unclear*] right straight through to December 31, '62. I told him at the time I thought that was entirely too early, that we would have to go at least to the middle of '63 and then I didn't know how much further than that you would want.

**President Kennedy:** Actually, you know what tests, what tests you'd

want to run now anyway, right, even if you get . . . [*unclear*]. Say you had nine months in which you could test, you know what tests . . . ?

**Seaborg:** In the weapons area. I'm not sure that we would know so well on the effects of—

**Wiesner:** But then this doesn't depend as much on the Russian tests as getting our own out of the way so that we know what our uncertainties are, so that . . .

**McNamara:** It doesn't depend exclusively on the Russian tests, but the Russian tests may influence our nuclear testing—

**Wiesner:** [*Unclear.*]

**McNamara:** —so that we do wish to have Russian test information available before we state finally and unequivocally that we would accept, could accept that, a certain test ban, without further testing. And I think, therefore, that the date suggested by the President is just about the right date, September 1 or June 1. Now, we might be able to shave the June 1 later, but we certainly won't know for some time.

**Foster (?)**: We still control the comprehensive, if we retreat to this. If we can't get the other, then we want to move on the other.

**Wiesner:** Now, within this discussion on the comprehensive on page 3, and I'd like to comment, as I did last time, that I think there are some inconsistencies with the proposal. I don't believe we can go to Geneva without talking about the means, the way . . . about capabilities of the system without talking about the specific system. I just don't understand how we're going to do this.

**Foster:** I agree with you.

**Dean:** [*Unclear*] within one day, I . . . sure, that I can easily walk this tightrope, but I know within one day I'll have to begin the —

**Wiesner:** [*aside to someone*] Page 3 in the . . .

**Dean:** —with the various specifics. I don't believe you can carry on any meaningful conversations beyond a certain point, without getting into ranges or if you're going to have numbers, you will say 10 percent or 25 percent, I mean that if taken down . . . a very very effective impact. I don't, myself, think it's quite realistic to say that you're going to say "substantial reduction" and then say, "but I won't tell you how much."

**McCloy:** Can't you ask the Soviets to commit themselves to an on-site inspection before you go in and talk specifics?

**Dean:** I can do that with them, but I mean . . . and our allies will immediately come to me and start saying, "What are you talking about here? I mean, how many control posts are you going to—"

**Bundy:** I think that's different with control posts than what it is with inspections. You can avoid talking about a specific number of inspections.

**President Kennedy:** Yeah.

**Dean:** I can relate the on-site—

**Bundy:** I believe we can be insistent on the control posts—[ *Unclear background exchanges.*]

**Wiesner:** I think you'd have to be prepared to discuss some configuration. You can get around this by talking about several—very elaborate ones and very simple ones—but otherwise you can't do what we suggest.

**Bundy:** We're not in any trouble on numbers of control [posts]—

**Wiesner:** Why?

**Bundy:** We talked this morning about a system of control posts that might be as much as 80, taking in all of the different kinds of [ *unclear* ] which is technically how [ *unclear* ]. This is embarrassing. The number of inspections that they want us to be having, to be honest [ *unclear* ].

**President Kennedy:** That question should be . . .

**Wiesner:** I understand that now, but I just want to make sure we understood . . . that this document says what we mean.

**Rusk:** Well, we're talking about proposing specific numbers. That doesn't mean that we can't, in the case of control posts, talk about orders of magnitude and approximations, and . . .

**Bundy:** What's really happened . . . [ *Unclear exchange.*]

**Wiesner:** We've got to be able to say, "Here is a system configuration and we think this will have defined detective capability."

**Paul Nitze:** But you can use that as an illustration.

**Wiesner:** Well, that can be an illustration.

**Nitze:** It doesn't have to be a proposal.

**Wiesner:** That's right. I understand that.

**Foster:** And you don't have to specify details of how this is [ *unclear* ]. You don't have to go into all the details precisely, [ *unclear* ]. The number and the location are variable.

*For the next three minutes of recording, the sound quality deteriorates.*

**Rusk:** Of course, I realize this would be a little difficult for Mr. Dean, but I do think it's important that we find ourselves negotiating with the Soviets, and not with the neutrals on these questions.

**Dean:** I'm not going to negotiate with the neutrals for that matter. [ *Unclear.* ] The President's going to have to telephone Mr. Macmillan, because the day that I land, all four of your allies are going to want to know pretty specifically what I'm going to discuss with the Russians. Always before we have had a Four Western meeting before the meeting began, and we've kept them very closely posted. Now, some of them are more discreet than others. Canada today is a very slippery ally on this point.



**Foster:** Is there any objection to saying that the control posts . . . if it's possible that after consideration we might be able to do reduce it somewhere in a range of up to 50 percent?

**Wiesner:** Bill, if you want to do what this says, which says we should be prepared to provide the conference with as much recent data as we can relating to detection, location, and identification capabilities of internationally supervised systems, national systems, you have to be specific about locations. I mean, just giving numbers like that permits a discussion that doesn't really agree with what this paper is saying [*unclear*]. This is the point I am trying to make.

**Foster:** You can't do it all at once, and the point is you move into this gradually—

**Unidentified:** All right.

**Foster:** And it seems to me if you have a range, it's perfectly possible to carry on negotiations.

**Unidentified:** That's right.

**Wiesner:** You may take this system that's more elaborate than the one you [*unclear*] get.

**Foster:** That's right.

**Wiesner:** My point is, if you're going to have any serious technical discussion, you have to specify what you're talking about.

**Nitze:** Well, let's not have the serious technical discussion in the first few days.

**Wiesner:** All right, [*unclear*].

**Dean:** Actually the [*unclear*] scientists don't like it.

**Wiesner:** Uh-huh.

**McCloy:** Can't you protect your on-site inspections by hinting much more elaborately what you're going to do with the control system? Isn't that enough for you to start off with at least, and then . . .

See the other thing we're not going to talk about until we get some missive from the Soviet Union that they're . . .

**Dean:** The on-site inspections doesn't bother me as much as the number of the controls. I think you're going to have to be . . . we just might discuss this with the Four or [the] Russians.

*Fifty-six seconds excised as classified information.*

**Dean:** Well, I'd like to get some here.

**Wiesner:** [*Unclear*].

**President Kennedy:** Well, I think the British are more the problem now because with this letter from the prime minister in which he says, "I believe there is a technique for [*unclear*] determining testing" [*unclear*] Ambassador. What he's saying is [*unclear*].

And I rather expect that that's going to be their position.

**Foster:** I think you can talk about ranges without drawing the full range [*unclear*]—

**President Kennedy:** What would we say scientifically on this question about the number of controls? What do we say . . . I know it would depend on the kind of station we talked about, but what is our range, depending on the kind of station? Just the 80?

**Franklin Long:** If I could talk just about the seismics. The couple of things that we have done in our recent [*unclear*] is, we have in the first place, focused on the Northern Hemisphere—Cuba, Russia, China, United States, Canada, and so on. And for those with a quite well controlled organization of 25 seismic stations, including, now, stations in the U.S.S.R., one gets really a system, with the U.S.S.R. stations, one gets a system whose capability is, I would say, indistinguishable from [*unclear*]. It's really a very satisfactory system.

Even the point that we made at the previous meeting was even if you didn't include the U.S.S.R. stations, it's a pretty respectable system. Now, one could push that number to 30, but 25, I think, would be a pretty satisfactory number.

**Rusk:** [*Unclear.*]

**Dean:** That's [*unclear*] seismic [*unclear*]?

**Long:** [*repeating Dean's phrase*] This is [*unclear*] seismic [*unclear*].

**Leland Haworth:** Mr. President, I think it's important that if we do mention any numbers of this sort, that we make the point that this is the Northern Hemisphere, so that it won't be in their minds that this is spread all over the world, because they might grant control with respect to almost a smaller fraction under the, coming under—

**Dean:** Now, we are talking about Asia, as I understand it?

**Unidentified:** Yeah, but [*unclear*] controls . . .

**Dean:** [*Unclear.*]

**Unidentified:** [*Unclear.*]

**Wiesner:** In the atmosphere of the United States. . .

**President Kennedy:** Now, if they ask you, in regard to on-site inspections, you will not give even the Four [*allies*], before we've talked [*unclear*] . . .

**Dean:** I plan, at present, Mr. President, the Soviets, with respect to on-site inspections, that we were quite prepared to relate the number of on-site inspections to the number of unidentified events in the Soviet Union.

**Foster:** Are you prepared to talk about that?

**Dean:** Talk about the number of unidentified events?

**Foster:** [*Unclear.*]

**Dean:** Then I think I can handle myself on that.

**President Kennedy:** You won't give them any . . .

**Dean:** I won't give them any specific numbers.

**President Kennedy:** Can you make it very clear, which we would . . . the fact that the information that we have does not permit . . .

**Dean:** We've got to have on-site inspections.

**Bundy:** Your government has not authorized you to discuss any concrete numbers until the principle of on-site inspections—

**Dean:** That's right.

**Bundy:** —is agreed upon.

**Dean:** That's right.

**President Kennedy:** Now, when you first get there, the first question really will be this atmospheric test ban.

What do you think of Arthur Dean saying that he'd be prepared to sign that tomorrow, if it would go into effect tomorrow?

With that . . . then they would say, the Russians would suggest, "Well, we can't do it tomorrow."

And we say, "Unless you're prepared to move right now." And then we'd have to pick another date, move back to our June date.

Then there's no hesitancy about our embracing it.

**Rusk:** If it isn't signed immediately then there is a problem of finding the right date. [*Mumbling in the background.*] So we have to be pretty careful not to accept in any way the Soviet alleged right to test now.

**Carl Kaysen:** Mr. President, if we get into the position of saying, after we've said we're prepared to sign it tomorrow, and we get a no to that, then we get into a discussion of the atmospheric test ban, don't we somewhat undercut our own position of trying to get discussion on the comprehensive [test ban]?

Wouldn't it be tactically better if, as you suggest, that if Arthur says, "Sure, we're prepared to sign one tomorrow" and we get the no answer on that, then let's say, "Let's talk about the comprehensive." I feel if we indicate a willingness to talk about the time at which in the future we're prepared to sign the atmospheric, we undercut our position for arguing that the comprehensive is quite important today.

**Dean:** Yeah.

**President Kennedy:** Well, I just . . . Well now, let's see, there's some certain adjustments [*unclear*] in our position on the general disarmament treaties.

**Unidentified:** [*Unclear*] their statements.

**Foster:** Let's start on page 4, Mr. President. [*reading*] "Stage I

Production.” It has been agreed to by the interested agencies and the Committee of Principals, and briefly: “The production of armaments during Stage I should be limited to replacement and repair of existing armaments. Replacement would be ‘in kind.’ The amount of production will be reduced at least as much as the reduction of armaments. Production of new types of weapons, of prototypes, and of new armament production facilities would be prohibited.”

This developed from the fact that any limitations by percentage, we talked about before, developed a variation in the percentages, developed a complication in definition to such an extent that, in view of the fact that we are [unclear] on the scope with this restriction, the announcement is late and in phase two [unclear] appear to be the simplest [unclear] between the agencies, and it doesn’t matter [unclear] frustration with this language [unclear].

**President Kennedy:** Yes, I see how this makes [unclear] position harder.

**Bundy:** Is there trouble in the Joint Chiefs concerning weapons?

**Lyman Lemnitzer:** We see problems, and we’re not sure what *in kind* means. We have questions about this particular area, and we feel it’s indefinite and not precise. But that’s *our* problem. We don’t know what *in kind* means.

**Foster:** By types, essentially.

**Lemnitzer:** Well, by types, categories . . .

**Wiesner:** It could be 2a or f.

**Bundy:** No, we’ll have to tie it down [unclear].

**Unidentified:** A B-52? [Unclear.]

**Lemnitzer:** That is a question of a strategic delivery type, whether it’s a missile . . . Are missiles and aircraft interchangeable?

**Foster:** No, it’s by types.

*For the next few minutes, the sound quality of the recording deteriorates.*

**Rusk:** [Unclear] this would be about the same.

**Lemnitzer:** Whether it’s a B-52, or a Minuteman, or an Atlas . . .

**Unidentified:** We’ll have to replace it.

**Bundy:** A B-52 [unclear].

**Unidentified:** Right. That’s a possibility. [Unclear.]

**Unidentified:** You can’t so redefine a B-52 that it turns into a Minuteman.

**Lemnitzer:** All right, take an Atlas and a Minuteman. Isn’t an Atlas replaceable by a Minuteman, because of obsolescence?

**Foster:** No.

**Unidentified:** No.

**Wiesner:** That's what *was* possible when it was categories

**Lemnitzer:** That's what got us into—

**Unidentified:** Correct.

**Lemnitzer:** —troubles.

**Unidentified:** Right.

**Lemnitzer:** [*Unclear.*]

**Unidentified:** In other words, your narrowing of the definition is in the interest of preserving—

**Bundy:** It's quite apparent that that definition would be exactly how much energy to exert [*unclear*] State Department. Minutemen [*unclear*].

**Unidentified:** [*Unclear.*]

**Wiesner:** That will have to be pinned down in the negotiations. The principle is to narrow—

**Lemnitzer:** That's the point we want to be so sure of: that this will be defined precisely in the ongoing negotiations.

**Wiesner:** It will have to be, yeah. . . .

**Foster:** We'll have an annex that would so define it.

**Unidentified:** You'll spend ten years negotiating this thing.

**Rusk:** [*Unclear.*] We may in fact wind up with one if we make any headway in this direction.

**Foster:** Yeah.

**President Kennedy:** Can we do number two now?

**Foster:** Well two has to do, Mr. President, with the reduction of military bases in Stage I, at least the willingness to discuss the reduction of military bases in Stage I without in any way giving way to the Soviet emphasis on foreign bases. It will only be discussed if substantial progress had been made in the reduction of armaments in the early parts of Stage I. It is felt that if we actually make progress in Stage I on those reductions then it would be logical to assume, that certain bases would be eliminated too, and therefore we'd be willing to discuss it with the Soviet Union.

This, again, is recommended as a method of, really, negotiating to disarm the attack of the Soviets in this regard, since they have made a lot of progress with all of the other members of the conference, on the basis that they know we're going to give up some bases, therefore why are we unwilling to discuss it. We're willing to discuss it after we've seen some signs of actual progress.

**Rusk:** As long as we're sure . . . but then how are you going to avoid discussing the available systems, [*unclear*] then?

**Lemnitzer:** We do see a problem in this area of bases vis-à-vis installations or facilities, the right interpretation of what bases happen to

mean. And it's just going to have to be very carefully looked at. It affects our whole NATO deployment, particularly, in which I have a particular interest right at the moment, but I speculate [*unclear*].<sup>75</sup>

We do believe this is an unfair contest on bases, insofar as giving up a base on our part, on [the] one hand, and the Soviets moving out. They can move into Europe very quickly, across the ground. If we pull out of Europe or our positions in the Far East, our reentry is an entirely different type of problem. We are at a distinct disadvantage, a military disadvantage in this field.

**Wiesner:** But there are limitations on this, though. . . .

**Lemnitzer:** Well, obviously, the way it's worded I'm just calling attention to some of the problems. Be prepared to discuss, if there is substantial progress. That's the way I understand it, Mr. President.

**Rusk:** The third point is that [*unclear*] this decision will be taken immediately from phase one to phase two. It seems a little hypothetical at this point given the general state of discussions. But the proposal here would be that we move it away from the Security Council, we make it by a two-thirds vote of the Control Council of the disarmament organization, and that the United States and the Soviet Union would have a veto. This would require nationalist China to be there, in the Security Council.

**Bundy:** [*Unclear*] NATO [*unclear*].

**Rusk:** Well, it says . . . we're clearly inferring those of *at least* the United States and the Soviet Union. Maybe one or two others who would insist on a veto.

**President Kennedy:** [*Unclear*] is this the general [*unclear*] for the public record.

**Dean:** Yes, sir, we would put this on the table.

**President Kennedy:** At least the United States and the Soviet Union . . .

**Dean:** Yes.

**Unidentified:** I would predict that the British and the French will object.

**Lovett:** No, as a matter of fact, they've recommended it.

**Dean:** The British . . . not the French, but the British have recommended it.

**President Kennedy:** Do you have any suggestions?

**Unidentified:** If it ever gets to that.

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75. Lemnitzer's appointment as supreme commander of NATO forces had been announced in July. He took up the post on 1 November.

**Foster:** Well, there are just a few more items.

**President Kennedy:** As for the ambassador's general plan of action, how are you going to . . . what are you doing about the technical briefing?

**Dean:** I thought I could handle immediate negotiations with [Valerian] Zorin and to the extent necessary with the Western Four, and then I thought I would gradually expand this number about . . . expand it [*unclear*] by the weekend of the . . .

**President Kennedy:** Does anybody really need . . . for your preliminary discussions with the Four as regards . . .

**Foster:** They've pretty well got all the facts.

**Dean:** Oh, they're all pretty well versed on this.

I would prefer that we keep this on a political basis until about a week . . . whatever they say . . . they're apt to pick up a chance remark of anybody that's most favorable to them and then quote it in the summary saying "I'm quoting an American scientist who says this," and that's . . . they're generally very [*unclear*]. I think it would be better if we could get [*unclear*] discussions for about a week.

**President Kennedy:** OK, well now, on the guidelines to the background [*unclear*].

**Dean:** Can I add just one fact in?

**President Kennedy:** Yes.

**Dean:** The Soviets have already agreed to go from 1.7 to 1.9, are we still not . . . does [*unclear*].

**Foster:** Further study is being undertaken on this, Mr. President, by the Joint Chiefs.

**Rusk:** This is a general [*unclear*] I assume. [*Unclear*] 3.1, the Soviets' 1.7. [*unclear*] 1.9. The Defense Department announced [*unclear*].

**President Kennedy:** How long would it be before we get an answer to it?

**Lemnitzer:** Recently there have been some real problems in this area of determining our forces, and one of the principal difficulties of identifying a military . . . civilian and military employee vis-à-vis a man in uniform. There's all sorts of possibilities. The Soviet Union has many of the things that we do in our services performed by civilians.

**President Kennedy:** What are our force levels now?

**Lemnitzer:** About 2.8 million.

**McNamara:** It's 3½ million, including civilians.

**Lemnitzer:** It is.

**McNamara:** This is one of our problems, Mr. President. To answer your question directly, I believe we have scheduled the completion of the

study for about the 20th of August. We can work on the disarmament dates to that date.

**Unidentified:** We have a meeting on August 20 [unclear].

**President Kennedy:** That meeting on August 20th [unclear]. Now, on the guidelines and background [unclear] of this meeting in August. [Unclear.]

**Rusk:** Mr. President, I do think that it's important, it's also important for the four Western powers and as at least a preliminary point for Zorin, that we ought to give very little more than you gave in your press conference today.

**President Kennedy:** Any use having Mr. Dean go up to the joint committee [on Atomic Energy].

**Dean:** I'd be very happy to go to the joint committee tomorrow.

**President Kennedy:** Bill, what's your judgment of their state of mind [unclear]?

**Foster:** Well we spent about two and a half hours with Senator [Chet] Holifield yesterday.<sup>76</sup> I think he's all right. We talked to Senator [Henry] Scoop Jackson and Senator [John] Pastore at breakfast this morning,<sup>77</sup> so they're pretty well up to this.

**President Kennedy:** It seems to me, unless there's some disadvantage or some use to have them . . .

**Rusk:** Well I think it would be important for the committee to know what Ambassador Dean is *not* going to do in Geneva. [Unclear] —

**Bundy:** That's right.

**President Kennedy:** All right. Why don't we see if we can get an appointment for tomorrow morning with the committee and let them [unclear].

**Bundy:** I suggest we have two committees hear it, not just one. [Unclear.]

**Foster:** I think Senator [unclear]?

**Unidentified:** [Unclear.]

**President Kennedy:** Well, when do you wish to go back? Didn't you say tomorrow? [Unclear background discussion.]

**Dean:** No sir. I've been trying to check on planes, but I think the earliest one I could get out is 9:15, 10:00 or 8:15, 10:00 on Friday morning.

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76. Senator Chet Holifield was the chairman of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy.

77. Henry "Scoop" Jackson was the chairman of the Subcommittee on Military Applications, and Senator John Pastore was the vice chairman of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy.



**President Kennedy:** Well, why don't we see if the committees could meet . . . the joint committee, with the Senate Foreign Relations, and they could invite . . .

**Unidentified:** How about Armed Services?

**President Kennedy:** Armed Services. Why don't they . . . Why don't we get the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to invite Senator [Richard] Russell and Senator [Leverett] Saltonstall to the Foreign Relations [unclear].<sup>78</sup>

**Foster:** Senator Russell, of course, is on the Joint Committee.

**President Kennedy:** I know that.

**Unidentified:** He never shows up.

**Rusk:** But you had breakfast with him.

**Foster:** [Unclear.] We had breakfast, and I called on him individually.

**President Kennedy:** Perhaps if somebody could call [Adrian] Fisher [unclear] and say that Mr. Dean could go around and see Senator Russell first about this.

**McCone:** I think that might be a good idea. [Unclear.]

**Unidentified:** We can say that. [Unclear exchange.]

**President Kennedy:** OK, I think that ought to be . . . if we need background, we're going to say that Mr. Dean is going up to Hill [unclear]. Now, do you want to make any suggestions about [unclear]?

**Rusk:** Mr. President, there's been a good deal of [unclear]. [Pauses.]

I think we ought to safeguard against such a thing. One is that there's a great row going on within the administration. This is a matter on which we have had consultation with any administration. We are all in agreement on the nine we've picked. We've consulted with the congressional leadership in sending Ambassador Dean to Geneva to find out what the possibilities are for a comprehensive test ban.

I think on the technical side that we need to indicate that we . . . what might be called the simple plan, is the minimum results of these technical developments with respect to the reduction in the number of suspicious events, some improvement in the range of detection, but nothing which indicates that we can eliminate on-site inspections.

I think that we should background that so far as we know, the Soviets have not changed their position.<sup>79</sup> They oppose all on-site inspections,

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78. Russell was chairman of the Armed Services Committee; Saltonstall was a member of that committee.

79. "Background that" means brief the press on a background basis.

which would preclude any optimism on that point. They have reaffirmed it very recently. And very much leave it at that. I wouldn't get into the question of exactly what these so-called internationally supervised national control posts are, because that'll take some negotiation in Geneva.

**Bundy:** It has to be [*unclear*]. That's where the heat will be. It's really imperative for us to try to spell that out.

**Edward Murrow:** Mr. President, do I understand that Ambassador Dean is going to accept the atmospheric test ban forthwith when he gets back to Geneva?

**Dean:** Well, not quite that way because their proposal on November the 28th is that we accept the atmospheric test ban *and* the [*unclear*]. [*Unclear exchange.*]

**Bundy:** [*Unclear*] see it [*unclear*] papers.

**Dean:** I want to look at . . . I want to examine Madame Myrdal's proposal, and see what she says before I say I'm going to accept an atmospheric test ban right off the bat.

**Rusk:** Can't you possibly get a commitment from that there won't be any pressures on a moratorium?

**Dean:** Right. I want to interview Madame Myrdal before I make any statement.

**Rusk:** And study the record.

**Dean:** What?

**Rusk:** And study the record.

**Dean:** Oh, and study the record.

**President Kennedy:** [*Unclear*] this says "name of observer from Moscow"? Where they said [*unclear*] . . . we make the point that our information makes it . . . we now conclude incontrovertibly that any nuclear test may be detected by national means. So that the scientific testing is going to be important to demonstrate and not [*unclear*] choice . . . and that, therefore, the scientific estimate ought not to be of extreme importance.

*For the next two minutes of the recording, the sound quality deteriorates.*

**Dean:** We also [*unclear*] their actual records [*unclear*] series. It's possible we could eliminate all on-site inspections.

**President Kennedy:** Where did you get that?

**Nitze:** Did Macmillan say that last night?<sup>80</sup>

**Dean:** Well, Macmillan, in an answer to the question in the House, said possibly all on-site inspections might be eliminated.

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80. British prime minister Harold Macmillan.

**Unidentified:** This is just the opposite of what he said about nine weeks ago.

**Dean:** Well, he's under terrific pressure.

**Unidentified:** We ought to keep our relations with [unclear].

The meeting dissolved into muffled discussion. Rusk can be heard referring to "political hope" with Bundy's adding that Dean might say, "Your scientists don't agree with ours." The President then said that it was time "to break this up," and the men are heard leaving. For the next ten minutes there is chatter in and around the room. Only the occasional word is intelligible.

5:35–6:25 P.M.

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*Times have changed. You can't do this anymore on a hit-and-miss basis like we've done in the past because now incidents of this kind are infinitely more important and more damaging than they've ever been before. . . . And the FBI . . . has never been effective.*

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### **Meeting with the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board (PFIAB)<sup>81</sup>**

There would be no let up in President Kennedy's schedule this day. From the test ban meeting he immediately went into a meeting with his Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board. President Kennedy gathered the board to discuss a serious press leak. A front-page story in the *New York Times* by Hanson Baldwin, which appeared on July 26, revealed detailed U.S. intelligence information on the size and strength of the Soviet intercontinental ballistic missile force.<sup>82</sup> The source of the article was apparently a National Intelligence Estimate on Soviet military forces that was distributed in the government in early July. For Kennedy this leak was the latest in a series of unauthorized disclosures of sensitive

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81. Including President Kennedy, Clark Clifford, Robert Kennedy, Dr. James R. Killian, Jr., Dr. Edwin H. Land, and Maxwell Taylor. Tape 5A, Presidential Office Files, Presidential Recordings Collection, John F. Kennedy Library.

82. Hanson Baldwin, "Soviet Missiles Protected in 'Hardened' Position," *New York Times*, 26 July 1962.

information.<sup>83</sup> He wanted to make an example out of Baldwin, the *Times's* longtime military affairs correspondent, and whoever leaked this information to him as a way of deterring similar leaks in the future.

Baldwin's piece not only described in detail the probable size of the U.S. superiority over the Soviet Union in numbers of intercontinental ballistic missiles and nuclear submarines—a fact that had been common knowledge since late in 1961—but also gave evidence of Soviet efforts to strengthen, or “harden,” the installations holding their ICBMs, which could only have come from the supersecret CORONA satellite program. Baldwin reported the assessment of U.S. military experts that these defenses would be of little help against a U.S. nuclear first strike. It was an important leak. There had been some talk in the Pentagon that summer of 1962 of the importance of coming up with a plan to wipe out all Soviet missiles before Russia could use them against the United States. Apparently someone at the highest level decided to affect the debate by leaking to the *New York Times*. And President Kennedy was furious. The very day he read the article the President had the Attorney General initiate an FBI investigation.<sup>84</sup>

The Bureau worked quickly. At 9:30 A.M., July 30, 1962, the FBI held a very high level briefing at the Pentagon for Robert McNamara, the secretaries of the armed forces, the members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and other high officials of the Department of Defense.<sup>85</sup> The FBI representative advised the group that the Bureau was investigating the source of the leak and needed help in determining Baldwin's contacts during his visit to Washington in mid-July. McNamara pledged his assistance and that of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA). The director of the Defense Intelligence Agency informed the Bureau that McNamara himself had met with Baldwin on July 19; but McNamara denied being the leaker. None of the other officials in attendance volunteered that they had seen Baldwin, though the Bureau suspected that Baldwin had met with several high-level Pentagon officials. That evening, two FBI agents

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83. In July 1961, the FBI investigated a *Newsweek* article by Lloyd Norman on contingency planning in the Berlin crisis (see director, FBI, to the Attorney General, “Article by Hanson W. Baldwin in the *New York Times*, July 26, 1962,” 31 July 1962, Hanson Baldwin Collection, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University).

84. The attorney general, Robert Kennedy, instructed the FBI to begin an investigation of the Baldwin leak on 26 July (FBI report, “Article by Hanson Baldwin in the *New York Times*, 26 July 1962, Espionage-X,” Hanson Baldwin Collection, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University).

85. D. E. Moore to W. C. Sullivan, 30 July 1962, Hanson Baldwin Collection, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University. Moore was the FBI officer who led the briefing at the Pentagon.

approached Baldwin at his home in Chappaqua, New York. Just back from work and rattled by this unexpected intrusion, Baldwin asked the G-men to leave and make an appointment to see him the next day at the *Times*.<sup>86</sup> The FBI demurred and instead put a tap on his home telephone. That night the FBI heard Baldwin tell a colleague: "I think the real answer to this is Bobby Kennedy and the President himself, but Bobby Kennedy particularly putting pressure on [J. Edgar] Hoover."<sup>87</sup> As of late afternoon August 1, FBI agents were preparing to visit Baldwin's appointments secretary to ask for a list of everyone the journalist had seen during his four-day Washington visit in July.<sup>88</sup>

President Kennedy was not satisfied with leaving the investigation to the FBI. He asked his Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board to evaluate the seriousness of the leak and in light of their assessment to suggest additional steps to deter leaks like this one. When he was first elected, John Kennedy thought he would have little use for these intelligence consultants. The President's father, Joseph P. Kennedy, had served on the President's Board of Consultants on Foreign Intelligence Activities, as PFIAB was called in the Eisenhower period, and apparently thought little of the organization. President Kennedy abolished the board of consultants and might have done without it but for the Bay of Pigs fiasco. Stunned by the role of the CIA in the failure of the paramilitary operation in Cuba, Kennedy reconstituted the board under a new chairman, Dr. James Killian of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He named an old family friend, Washington lawyer Clark Clifford, to the board, which numbered eight members including Harvard international historian William Langer and the President's military adviser, General Maxwell Taylor.

The President turned on the tape at the start of the discussion of Baldwin.

**President Kennedy:** I'd just like to say before I . . . I want to get it so it's independent . . . nonagency evaluation of the significance of this Baldwin article because, you know, there is so much braying down here

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86. Director, FBI, to the Attorney General, 31 July 1962, Hanson Baldwin Collection, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University.

87. *Ibid.*

88. Mossien to Hanson Baldwin, Memorandum for the Record, 4 September 1962, Hanson Baldwin Collection, Sterling Memorial Library. Mossien worked for the *New York Times*.

about a lot of these things that appear in the press and it's hard to separate what is really a bad leak from other kinds of leaks, which we see every day.

Secondly, whether, if this leak is serious, whether we . . . there is any action that we could take with . . .

I had a talk a year ago with some of the publishers about this matter without much success and maybe there is nothing that can be done.<sup>89</sup> But if this is a serious leak then, it seems to me, that we ought to do something about bringing it to the attention of the responsible people, who are, presently, you know, the publishers' associations and see whether they feel stimulated to take some action of their own.

**Unidentified:** Yes, sir.

**James Killian:** [*Unclear.*] It is the judgment of your board today that this is one of the most damaging unauthorized disclosures and leaks that we have any knowledge of in our experience. There is no doubt. And we made a detailed analysis here that we have tried to make available to you as to what this means in terms of the coordinated intelligence operations we've been carrying on. And, in our judgment, this is going ultimately to result in the diminution of the intelligence that we have available to us because the Soviets will now be prompted to engage in concealment and deception. There are many technical ways that they can do this. We think it inevitable, this is going to reduce the intelligence take on very vital kinds of intelligence now which has to do with the whole balance of power, and our military planning, the problem of [*unclear*] and the SIOP and our own missile program.<sup>90</sup>

We would say to you unequivocally that this has been a tragically serious breach of security.

**President Kennedy:** What I find is incomprehensible . . . that someone of [Hanson] Baldwin's experience and stature and the status of the [*New York*] *Times* would do it in a story which was not of particular interest to anyone but the Soviet Union.

**Killian:** We certainly share this feeling, in fact. And given his presumed military knowledge and background, we just think it incomprehensible that he should do this.

**President Kennedy:** Can I get a memorandum or a letter from you which is a statement of what you've just told me?

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89. Presidential Statement to the American Publishers' Association, 1961.

90. The Single-Integrated Operational Plan (SIOP) was the U.S. nuclear strike plan.

**Killian:** Yes. We have a brief statement here.<sup>91</sup> Perhaps I might just read this quickly. [*Begins to read paper.*]

*Three minutes and 28 seconds excised as classified information.*

**Killian:** Does this answer your question?

**Unidentified:** Yeah, it does. It definitely does. It does. Yes.

**President Kennedy:** What is your judgment as to how many people might have had—well, of course it is hard for you to make that judgment. How many people might have had the capacity to have given this kind of information to this [*unclear*]?

**Killian:** Such information as we have available and we're . . . After you had reduced the list of the distribution of the estimates, about 33 people, who got the list.<sup>92</sup> In addition to that, there were some hundred people at least who were engaged in the preparation of the estimate. And it was this group, perhaps enlarged by some factor—we think the secretaries who get this and transmit it to the people that work for them and various other people—probably the number is substantially greater than a hundred, engaged in the preparation process.

We have some comments to make on this because we think in dealing with this highly sensitive material that if we change procedures to reduce the number of people involved in handling this kind of material in the estimating process—

**Robert Kennedy:** I might say, Mr. President, that's the same conclusion as we reached from our investigation that there must have been several hundred people who had this information.<sup>93</sup>

**Killian:** It's a lot of people.

**Edwin Land:** There are a lot of loyal people. There are about seven thousand people now who have access to this general information and our impression is that the operating people, the people who work at it and gather the information, are responsible because they're involved in it.

Our general concern is what happens to the information when it gets to high levels.

**President Kennedy:** [*to Killian*] Jimmy, what is your guess as to the effect on the Soviet Union if it became known that we regarded this as a

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91. Document not found.

92. The estimates are National Intelligence Estimates (NIEs), which were produced by the Office of National Estimates in a process supervised by the U.S. Intelligence Board. The NIEs drew on the full range of intelligence resources available to the several intelligence organizations serving the government. The sensitivity of the information contained in the estimates necessitated that distribution be as limited as practicable.

93. The Attorney General oversees the FBI.

very dangerous—we feel—as a dangerous leak? In other words, this was enough of a red light to them that . . . Would this have been enough of a red light that any publicity about our feeling that this was a very damaging leak would not add to our security loss at the moment?

**Killian:** It's highly doubtful. [I would] answer that this way: that they may well consider that this kind of article written in this newspaper by this man [is] probably with authority. This is one of the things that makes [*unclear*] leaks a particular kind of problem; but we would also have to add to that, that public discussion of this particular situation will undoubtedly tend to authenticate still further, the article. [*Unclear.*] And I think it would be necessary to weigh the possible authentication effects for the Soviets against remedial measures that may be essential to—

**President Kennedy:** There wasn't enough authentication in the article for them, given the information they have and therefore judging how much information we had, that they probably are able to authenticate it sufficiently that way?

**Killian:** That's the kind of thing that Dr. Land has just mentioned—

**President Kennedy:** Yes.

**Killian:** They can relate this directly to specific events that this reveals of our observing. This is an authenticating kind of aspect to the article that makes it even worse than you might think.

**Land:** That's right Mr. President, [we spent] a great deal of the day discussing this point and I suppose that what we feel is so much is revealed that it's unlikely that much damage would be done. But we're a little [*unclear*] directing the plan; yet we are a little reluctant to take the chance of having to discipline someone directly for doing it . . . that would authenticate it. I suppose by not [*unclear*] the discipline that Dr. Killian will discuss [*unclear*] vital . . . and disciplinary steps should be taken but with some effort to separate the disciplinary action from that particular article.

**Killian:** Public [*unclear*] action. Well, we have ventured to put down some suggestions here. Whether they are practical from your point of view or not, you will have to judge. Realizing how difficult and impractical this area is, we nevertheless feel that we ought to try to grapple with it.

We would make this kind of comment, first of all: Given the damaging nature of this, it justifies you in taking very drastic and unprecedented procedures to prevent it in the future. I might make the observation that having observed our responses to security breaks over a period of years, having observed a certain ultimate timidity in trying to do something about them that we have seen a situation evolve wherein those who engage in security leaks probably have no real fear that any punitive



action will be taken. And this is a part of the problem that we face at the present time. This is one of the reasons why we feel so strongly that if you could find the ways and the means appropriately to take drastic action, even though this drastic action might result in adverse criticism temporarily, after a period, that the national interest would be well served by your doing it, and taking the adverse reactions as they might come. It's been, I think, the fear of adverse reaction that prevented any kind of, this remedial action being taken in the past.

It is easy for us to say these things to you and you will have to evaluate the risk of approving this. But it is our considered judgment that you will be justified even against the possibility of reactions by the press or reactions within your own official family to do some things that obviously are of an unprecedented and drastic nature.

We would suggest that the first and most basic response which obviously ought to be taken here is to be a very clear indication on your part of the seriousness with which you consider this particular security break, and the [unclear] that you were asking at the beginning. And to the extent that we can be helpful in providing you with a backup statement as to how serious we deem this to be, we will give you such documentation as you might find useful.

**President Kennedy:** I wonder if I, in other words, if I can get a letter from you —

**Killian:** Yes. We thought that if this would be useful to you we'd fight [unclear]. Now, we suggest, for example, that you might call a special meeting of the National Security Council and make a very strong statement at such a meeting to make clear to all of the cabinet officers involved that you have a cumbersome staff problem, in deadly [unclear], how serious you feel this to be and how important it is that we prevent it in the future.

It may be the force of your concern will strengthen the hands of each of the people who are involved, as for example the Secretary of Defense and all the members of his staff, in dealing with the problem, the petty things, which have been very difficult.

We know, of course, that you have initiated an FBI investigation of this particular situation. We recommend that should the offenders be identified that you authorize drastic discipline, individual discipline. That such discipline be taken in a way that leaves no doubts in the minds of the offenders' associates about how disastrous their actions have been and the punishment that has been meted out.

And I think all of us feel very strongly that provided the man can be identified, that the men can be identified, that really drastic action is indicated. And that this will be the best way to prevent future occur-

rences of this sort. And that in very few instances, the facts that we know anything about, where punitive action hasn't worked—

**President Kennedy:** Well, you remember the . . . the one case back that I talked to Secretary McNamara and the other generals . . . they got a call that they thought they probably had the—

**Killian:** This was the letter from Secretary Rusk.

**President Kennedy:** Yeah. Indeed, they're sort of [*unclear*]. They're rather pessimistic about their chances but they need to make [*mumbles*]. . . .

**Killian:** We make a further suggestion that in the event that the investigation reveals—and this comes about as a result of a discussion that we had with General Taylor, in particular—offices or groups that might have been involved in this thing, that the situation would justify taking some kind of disciplinary action against the whole of that particular office group, even though he personally might have not been directly involved in this [*security*]. But, this would, again, do much to alert people and indicate the seriousness and the determination to stamp out this kind of thing.

We recommend another kind of thing, that consideration be given to the establishment and distribution of new policies in the Department of Defense and the other agencies involved in handling classified intelligence material, about procedures to be followed by personnel when talking to the press.

We suggest consideration be given to a requirement in such a policy that officers, both civilian and military, be required to prepare memoranda reporting each conversation they have had with representatives of the press and that such memoranda be filed with the head of the department or agency in which they are involved.

**President Kennedy:** Do you think that anybody who talks to a newspaperman at the Pentagon should first clear it with the press officer or that he should have a third person present to . . . ?

**Killian:** Well, we have some skepticism about the third person for a variety of reasons. We think, first of all, that the press will not accept this. There will be a quite powerful reaction to this as an overall policy. We think that this suggestion of having them understand that they are expected to prepare a memorandum of their discussions, and that this memorandum must be filed with the head of their particular branch or agency, would help to make them more careful, more reticent and would, in the event that they don't prepare the memorandum, leave the man in a much more vulnerable position to that punitive action in the event that it is necessary. This is one of the problems [*unclear*].

**Land:** I can't; I tend to—

**Killian:** We have not discussed the question of whether a man should check in with the central office before he has a meeting with the press. This might be a very—

**Unidentified:** Well, this gives an immediate record of everyone the press representative might see.

**President Kennedy:** All right, so the burden would be on the government rather than on the newspaperman—

**Killian:** Yes.

**President Kennedy:** So it might be more polite to accept it. Right. The press might not want to go to clear it. [*Unclear.*]

**Killian:** We don't see that the press could have any adverse reaction to this, at all. Because this is none of their business.

**Maxwell Taylor:** I might say others have—

**Killian:** You are not interfering with their access to personnel.

**Taylor:** We're not talking about a lot of people either in the Pentagon.

**Killian:** No.

**Taylor:** I would say that the people who should be allowed to talk regularly to the press are very few and in the past have been very few.

**Killian:** Still another suggestion is that there ought to be a sharper identification, a listing of those particular areas that have a high degree of sensitivity, more than we have done so far.

And then the procedures should be adopted, even more stringent than those we now have. [*Unclear*] access [*unclear*] of the kind that we're talking about involving this, too.

This board has undertaken to prepare its list of such areas and we think that the Director of Central Intelligence and the Director of the Intelligence Agency of the DOD ought to make an analysis of this [*unclear*], too.<sup>94</sup> Then it can be made clear, clearer than it is now that there are these certain areas that must be handled in very special ways and that people must take extreme precautions.

We next suggest as I mentioned earlier that we ought to try to reduce the number of people involved in the estimating process, when the estimates involve this kind of high[ly] sensitive materials. [*Someone says "That's right."*] Having a list of these areas of high sensitivity, the National Estimates Board ought to limit the accessibility to this information when they deal with these particular kinds of topics, cutback on

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94. The abbreviation DOD stands for Department of Defense.

this 200 as we were talking about, keep it very very small. It may well be that there are certain kinds of information that is [sic] so sensitive and obviously so valuable as ought not to be handled in any way except by hand-carrying [*unclear*] locked, like a courier, certainly.

We make another observation here with some hesitancy, but nevertheless I think it was the clear opinion of the board that the FBI may not be the best agency to conduct investigations of leaks of this kind. The history has shown that they have never been either enthusiastic or successful in dealing with serious security breaches. As I am sure you are fully aware, Mr. Hoover apparently doesn't like to get into this field.<sup>95</sup> He feels it is an administrative responsibility rather than an FBI type of responsibility. We're unsure how enthusiastic the FBI is when it undertakes to make an investigation.

We say this not wanting to be unfair to the agency. But for, I think, a more fundamental reason: that is, we believe that there ought to be within the defense, within the intelligence community itself, the means to conduct this kind of search and investigation. The act gives the Director of Central Intelligence the responsibility for protecting the sources of our intelligence information.<sup>96</sup> He really has no mechanism to do this at the present time. The only committee of USIB that has at least the designation of being a committee to deal with security problems . . . We would suggest, therefore, that the Director of Central Intelligence be encouraged to develop an expert group that would be available at all times to follow up on security leaks.

When the FBI gets into this problem, they are not cleared in the first place as we discovered in this particular situation.<sup>97</sup> They start from behind the starting line. It takes them a long time to get the necessary background to begin to be effective. We ought to have a trained, experienced and knowledgeable team available to deal with this problem whenever and wherever it arises. And perhaps, maybe, this could be approached in two ways: One, we say ask the Director of Central Intelligence to make sure that he has such a team available to him operating under his direction.

And next that the director of the intelligence agency of the DOD

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95. J. Edgar Hoover had been the director of the Bureau of Investigation and its successor, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, since 1924.

96. The act is the National Security Act of 1947. Clark Clifford, a member of PFIAB, participated in the drafting of that act.

97. They did not have security clearance for matters of national security.

have a similar group that can work in the Department of Defense. Because under the new directive establishing the intelligence agency in Defense, the director of that clearly has the responsibility for security, but he is just getting started and so far doubtless does not have any real reasons to discharge this responsibility.

Here are two ways that we think it would be better and would have an important effect, a deterrent effect, on leaks in the future, if we had such groups available to respond to it.

**Clark Clifford:** I think, Mr. President—

**Killian:** This would be better than the FBI.

**Clifford:** I think this is the most effective recommendation that the group makes: that there be a full-time, small group, devoting themselves to this all the time. I believe that that group could become knowledgeable about the pieces that these various men write, like Baldwin and Alsop and so forth.<sup>98</sup> They can after awhile become pretty knowledgeable about who these men are seeing, these columnists, where these leaks occur. It can be done quietly, unobtrusively [so] that they have a wealth of background from which to select the information. They're at it on a full-time basis.

Times have changed. You can't do this anymore on a hit-and-miss basis like we've done in the past because now incidents of this kind are infinitely more important and more damaging than they've ever been before.

**Killian:** That's right.

**Clifford:** And the FBI, as Jim says, has never been effective. I remember in 1946, they had a bad leak in the State Department that 16 years ago they gave the same kind of report and I bet I've seen plenty of them. They never found out who it was. They were really valueless. But a full-time group that is working on it all the time and has some background so that when one of these leaks occurs, they don't start from scratch. They're already very well oriented in the field.

**Taylor:** I think if this can be combined with a thorough system of keeping memo for record . . . if this kind of group—

**Unidentified:** Yes.

**Taylor:** —went around and looked at the memo of record all through the Pentagon, they'd see the pattern of behavior simply.

**Unidentified:** Sure. They would.

**Killian:** There are many things that such a sensitized group could do that . . . They could follow the press and see evidence of . . .

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98. Clifford could be referring to Joseph Alsop or to Stewart Alsop.

**Taylor:** We'd know the trends, where their contacts . . .

**President Kennedy:** That's a very good idea. We'll do that.

What about this particular case in regard to the *Times* itself? We've had two or three bad leaks from the *Times*: one was the Finney story of several years ago which caused the Russians to change their own method of sending communications on the telephone.<sup>99</sup>

**Killian:** We were briefed at our last meeting on the fact that you had protected firing of a Polaris-type of missile on a Russian submarine out of fear that the *New York Times*, in a Finney story a couple of days later, [would] essentially [say] the information that the Russians have on the Polaris type is bogus. This supports what you say. . . .

**President Kennedy:** You think there is any . . . You would describe this as, what, one of the worst that you have seen?

**Unidentified:** [ *Unclear.* ]

**President Kennedy:** Which one is worse?

**Killian:** I don't know of any one that is worse.

*Thirteen seconds excised as classified information.*

**Killian:** But that wasn't the first kind of a leak to the press. It was another . . .

**President Kennedy:** Do you suggest that . . . this is, of course, a . . . the *New York Times* would be . . . I am not sure how effective a question [ *unclear* ] here. Clark Clifford might suggest some recommendations at the moment.

The nature of the press, as I say, I had a very . . . I found their conversation very . . . I made a speech up there in which I suggested that they examine the matter after Cuba.<sup>100</sup> And they were very unreceptive to it and they came down, five or six of them when they were here to [ *unclear* ]. And I was just wondering whether there was anything to do with them. They are the most privileged group.

**Killian:** And they're all sitting on their asses.

**Unidentified:** That's right.

**President Kennedy:** And they regard any action in this area as a limi-

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99. John Finney was the *New York Times* science correspondent.

100. Kennedy was referring to the role of the press in the Bay of Pigs affair. Days before the start of the operation, Kennedy had asked Orvil Dryfoos, the president and publisher of the *New York Times*, to withhold information about the Bay of Pigs operation. The *New York Times* complied. On 27 April 1961, in a speech delivered in New York City to the American Newspaper Publishers Association, Kennedy called on the press to "heed the duty of self-restraint which that danger [the present danger] imposes upon us all." *Public Papers of the Presidents, John F. Kennedy, 1961* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1962), p. 337.

tation on their civil rights. And they are not very used to it. On the other hand, I wouldn't think that [Orvil] Dryfoos would be very happy using his paper for a very unimportant story about our estimating function [*unclear*] the effect that you describe. What is your opinion, Clark, whether we ought to try going to the publishers or not . . . or the publishers?

**Clifford:** My feeling in this particular instance is that the transgression is such a tragic one that it would be a mistake on the part of the President or this committee to let it go without bringing it to the attention of Dryfoos. I'm sure he doesn't recognize all the implications. I'm assuming he's a loyal American. If he knew what this did to our national security, then I believe there might be less likelihood of this happening in the future. If, however, nothing is done with reference to Dryfoos, then I think they proceed on the assumption that "I guess this isn't doing any damage, let's encourage our boys to get more of the same."

It is my opinion that some contact should be made with Dryfoos, and it should be brought to his attention that this is perhaps the most serious transgression of its kind that's occurred since you've been President and that the damage is so severe it's probably incalculable and that the purpose of bringing it to his attention is on the basis that if he knew the amount of damage done then there is much less likelihood of it occurring again.

**Killian:** We've had quite a lot of discussion about this.

**Clifford:** And there may be some different feeling on the part of other members of the board.

**President Kennedy:** What about the publishers' group that came to meet me last year?<sup>101</sup> Six or seven of them, who were more or less . . . [*unclear*]. I guess they were the board of publishers. I had trouble with a speech in which I had suggested at that time the necessary procedures to prevent this thing. I'm wondering whether we should—*Time* [magazine] is actually one of the worst offenders of this kind over the years. Its contacts are the best. What do you think?

Of course, as this thing becomes rumored around, which it will, then I wonder whether we ought to attempt . . . what's your judgment of our bringing to other publishers' attention that this atmosphere is disastrous?

**Clifford:** I doubt that there is much usefulness in that. You get a

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101. On 9 May 1961, President Kennedy met with officials from the American Newspaper Publishers Association, the American Society of Newspaper Editors, the Associated Press, and the United Press International (David R. Davies, "Kennedy and the Press, 1960–1963," in the Presidential Recordings Project Archive, Miller Center of Public Affairs).

group of publishers together and each seems to sustain the other in his position that the government should not interfere with their business. Also, it's much more likely to be spread around when there is a group of them called in to discuss it.

My present notion is that probably the best approach is to make individual contacts with publishers as this type of incident occurs. And there probably are not more than 6 or 8 or 10 or 12 in the country who have papers of such substantial influence that it would be necessary.

I hope that no more of them occur. I think we all know that they will occur. These occur every so often, and if there were some procedure by which that publisher when such an incident occurs, and it can be pinpointed and he can be shown the damage that has occurred, then I would hope ultimately there'd be a greater feeling of responsibility on their part in the future. It may not work, but I think it ought to be tried because I think that in some way there is an avoiding of responsibility unless it's brought to the attention of a publisher when such an amount of damage has been done.

**Killian:** There'll never be a better case than that to justify certain [unclear].

**President Kennedy:** Do you have a . . . can you then draft for me a letter which I can use as the source? I also have a statement from Mr. McCone and Secretary McNamara as to the seriousness—

**Killian:** Yes.

**President Kennedy:** —and I would use that as the basis of my letter to Dryfoos.

**Killian:** Very [unclear].

**President Kennedy:** But I think . . . And I agree with you about the establishment of a group over there because there isn't any doubt that they can follow this very closely, a lot of this stuff goes out. You only just described about the submarine. We had that coming in and in addition, the press were aware and the Pentagon, and the State Department, and the CIA were aware that there was this group. That would . . . might have a very very useful effect.

**Killian:** Yes.

**Clifford:** We saw a report after you saw it today, too, that—  
*Two seconds excised as classified information.*

**Clifford:** —told about Hanson Baldwin coming to Washington on the day before this report was disseminated. And they say he was there that day, he was there the next day. It is known that on the day that the report was disseminated, he spent that day at the Pentagon. Well, now that's apparently all they know.



I say that this group can know who it is who he's seeing at the Pentagon. They can find that out, I think, within a period of a few short months. They can find out who are Hanson Baldwin's contacts. When he goes over to the Pentagon, who does he see? Nobody knows now. The FBI doesn't know. But I think it would be mighty interesting to know when he drops [in] over there whom he sees. And I think it would be mighty interesting to know who Alsop sees and who Chalmers Roberts sees and the rest of these fellows.<sup>102</sup> Let's then begin to get up a file on these different men because if they begin to know where to go. . . . To my knowledge it's never been done before and it is long overdue.

**Killian:** All right, sir, we will prepare and give to you that statement.

**President Kennedy:** I think everyone who has clearance for this particular type of a sensitive . . . We ought to establish the procedure whether they see them at their home or any place that we get the memorandum on their conversation and it should be from anybody from the White House or anyplace else. And that we get that established and failure to do so would be regarded as a breach. [*Unclear.*]

**Killian:** The knowledge among all the people who are seeking this material that you are deeply concerned about this and prepared to take action on the matter [*unclear*].

**Clifford:** Mr. President, you made one comment, I think maybe we might want to refer to. I would wonder about the advisability of writing Dryfoos a letter [*Killian is heard muttering in the background*] and sending copies of a letter that Dr. Killian might get out for McNamara—

**President Kennedy:** I thought if it was delivered by hand and then brought back by hand but—

**Clifford:** That would concern me a good deal. In the first place you have gone on record in such a manner that it would indicate that perhaps that the article is based upon fact which would concern me some. Who would see it besides Dryfoos, I don't know. We can't be absolutely certain—

**Killian:** He suggests that we would send it—

**Clifford:** Well, I know that, but— [*Killian speaks indistinctly.*]

**President Kennedy:** How else would we get it to Dryfoos's attention?

**Clifford:** If you intended to get it to Dryfoos's attention directly, it would seem to me that the most effective way would be for you to talk to Dryfoos. I doubt that a letter from the President would have much effect

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102. Chalmers M. Roberts wrote for the *Washington Post*.

upon him. I believe if I were a newspaper publisher and the President of the United States told me what damage this had done to my country, I think it would make a hell of an impression on me.

Now, you can't do that with all of them, but there's only one *New York Times*. It's considered generally to be the most influential. Every newspaper in the country takes the *New York Times*. And this would be an interesting test to see if this could be effective insofar as the *New York Times* is concerned.

**Killian:** Again, appealing to them because of their great prestige and influence to exercise [their] responsibility.

**President Kennedy:** Good. Well, as I say . . . let's work on the best way to establish the contact. What I need, of course is [*unclear*]—

**Killian:** Well, I understand how you feel about putting anything in writing.

**President Kennedy:** Is the judgment from you as to its seriousness because they will tend to dismiss anything we in government say as just an attempt to . . .

**Killian:** All right.

**Taylor:** Would you see any disadvantage in the President showing the kind of letter you're going to write?

**Killian:** No, I see no disadvantage.

**President Kennedy:** I think that . . . it would be necessary to have just two. One would be a report to me; and the other would be a letter which I could show to Dryfoos to demonstrate that this is not a—

**Killian:** Yes.

**President Kennedy:** —overly sensitive administration. [*Everyone laughs.*]

**Unidentified:** Thank you very much.

**Killian:** I bet you've had a heavy day.

**President Kennedy:** Yes, I did. You will put in writing all the things that—?

**Killian:** Yes, we will. [*Meeting ends.*]

**Evelyn Lincoln:** Is Dr. Killian with you?

*The President, or possibly Evelyn Lincoln, turned off the machine.*

The last meeting of the day was with Representative Wright Patman, Walter Heller of the Council of Economic Advisers, and Larry O'Brien, the President's congressional liaison. The President did not tape it. Then it was on to the pool and dinner.