

The
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RECORDINGS

JOHN F. KENNEDY

➔➔➔➔ *THE GREAT CRISES, VOLUME TWO* ➔➔➔➔

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Bundy: OK.

McNamara: Now, there's not much we can do to help. I'd be happy to, though, if you think of anything we can do. We'll go to work tonight and get these numbers of sorties, by target systems, laid out. [Admiral] Riley's up in Mac's office and I'll go down there now and get them started on it.

Carter: I think Mr. McCone could be helpful to you all in the morning.

McNamara: Well, I think he should try to stay here at 8:30.

Carter: He's been worrying about this for a heck of a long time.

Ball: Sure.

This small informal meeting then breaks up. The recording picks up a few fragments of conversation. Bundy and Ball talk about eating supper together. Bundy and Ball apparently refer to the secretarial problems that arose from informing so few people about the crisis. Then there is silence. After a few minutes a man comes in to clean the room. Evelyn Lincoln walks in, speaks briefly to him, and apparently she turns off the machine.

Everyone was still trying to conceal the start of the crisis by appearing to maintain their known schedules. President Kennedy went to another farewell dinner for Bohlen, hosted by columnist Joseph Alsop. At the dinner he drew Bohlen aside and they had a long, animated, private conversation. Kennedy reportedly asked Bohlen if he could stay, but Bohlen feared that delaying his long-planned departure for Paris might arouse unwanted notice and comment.

Meetings resumed that evening at the State Department, winding up in Rusk's office at about 11:00 P.M. McNamara slept at the Pentagon that night. McCone returned to Washington.

Wednesday, October 17, 1962

As arranged on Tuesday, Kennedy's advisers had met at 8:30 Wednesday morning, October 17, in a conference room on the seventh floor of the State Department. McCone, now back in Washington, joined them. There, Ball reiterated his opposition to any military action, expressing doubt that the Soviet leaders really understood what they had done. Thompson

argued that Khrushchev knew what he was doing and wanted a showdown on Berlin. In this view, Khrushchev thought the missiles in Cuba armed him for that confrontation. Taylor and McCone sided with Thompson. After less than an hour, McCone and Bundy left for the White House.

Arriving at about 9:30 A.M., McCone briefed President Kennedy. The CIA director came away with the impression that Kennedy, too, leaned toward prompt military action. Kennedy asked McCone to go to Gettysburg and give Eisenhower a full briefing. McCone then drove off to Pennsylvania and reported back later that Eisenhower thought the situation was intolerable. The former president said he would support any decisive military action.

Meanwhile Kennedy had moved on to his 10:00 meeting.

10:00–11:30 A.M.

I don't know, Mr. Minister . . . if we should make this the great issue, whether we can win that fight. . . . Can we justify—we're talking about opinion in the world—fighting our way up the autobahn because they won't give a visa?

Meeting with West German Foreign Minister Gerhard Schroeder¹

On September 10 Kennedy had met with his top advisers to approve a preferred sequence of military actions in a conflict over Berlin. Rusk urged allied ambassadors in Washington to accept the plan, hoping the Soviets would notice this united resolve and step back from confrontation.

McNamara declared in a press conference on September 28 that the Berlin situation was the most severe since the combat operations during the Korean War. The United States would “utilize whatever weapons are needed to preserve our vital interests,” he said. “Quite clearly, we consider access to Berlin a vital interest.”² This sense of danger intensified in the early weeks of October.

Khrushchev's letter of September 28 made it clear that, once the U.S.

1. Including President Kennedy, Gerhard Schroeder, and translator Kusterer. Tape 29, John F. Kennedy Library, President's Office Files, Presidential Recordings Collection.

2. Editorial Note, *FRUS*, 15: 336.

congressional elections were over, he would return to the issue of Berlin, this “dangerous hotbed which spoils our relations all the time.” Kennedy believed that Soviet interference with access to Berlin was imminent and that the West needed to make some move to defuse the situation before such action took place. Kennedy also believed that the vulnerable Western position in Berlin was complicating the situation in Cuba. He told West Berlin mayor Willy Brandt on October 5 that, if not for Berlin, the United States would feel free to take action against Cuba. A few days later, he told French foreign minister Couve de Murville that the Soviet actions on Cuba made the chances of reaching agreement on Berlin very slim. Kennedy feared that Khrushchev might try to “force something.”

Kennedy’s sense of urgency was aggravated by his frustration with the West Germans. The general atmosphere of U.S.–West German relations was bad. Kennedy felt, with some cause, that Adenauer was voicing complaints about U.S. weakness to almost anyone who would listen and was planting hostile stories in the press. More concretely, the visa issue was one point of contention. The East Germans wanted visitors from the Western zones of Berlin to have to obtain East German visas for their passports. Getting those visas would acknowledge that the visitor was crossing from one country into another rather than from one Allied Zone to another. Since the Western position in Berlin rested on preserving the Allied Zones, German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and his foreign minister, Gerhard Schroeder, said the GDR visa requirement must be resisted. Brandt favored accepting East German visas rather than resort to countermeasures that might risk a clash.

Frustrated by the impasse over Berlin, Kennedy wanted the Germans to come up with new ideas. But the proposals coming from Bonn and Berlin did not impress him. Brandt had warmed to Adenauer’s suggestion of a plebiscite in Berlin, an idea the chancellor discussed with Bundy at the beginning of October. Adenauer also advocated another offer to the Soviets: The Germans would accept a ten-year moratorium on discussions of German reunification if Moscow would promise not to disturb Western access to Berlin. Adenauer thought Kennedy might make this proposal to Khrushchev during the Soviet leader’s planned visit to the United States in November.³

Behind all this the Americans and West Germans had quite different perspectives on the Soviet threat, which came quickly to the surface. The

3. Memorandum of Conversation between Adenauer and Ambassador Walter Dowling, 12 October 1962, Adenauer Papers, Stiftung Bundeskanzler-Adenauer-Haus, III/61.

Americans thought they could see various signs pointing to a coming crunch on access to Berlin, including intelligence information on East bloc security preparations for some sort of confrontation by November. A week earlier, Kennedy warned Adenauer: "I have been reviewing our plans for preparations for any crisis that may be forced upon us by the Soviet Union in Berlin, and I am increasingly convinced that we need to make stronger and clearer arrangements."⁴ Rusk had just met with Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko in Paris, the first such high-level U.S.-Soviet meeting in months. The entire three-hour discussion was devoted to arguments about Berlin. So the U.S. leaders, from Kennedy on down, were deeply uneasy about Berlin, though a bit puzzled about whether the Soviets would really test U.S. promises to go to war over Berlin. Worried about the threat, the Americans wanted to improve their military readiness for a crisis and (especially Kennedy) wanted to avoid any unnecessary flash points.

The West German government stance, by contrast, was to persuade the U.S. government to take a very tough stand on every detail of Western status in Berlin. Their argument was that the Soviets were not such a big threat if they could see the Americans were strong and determined. So the West Germans appeared to downplay the Soviet threat in order to argue for a tough U.S. political position, while the Americans emphasized the Soviet threat in arguing that they needed more political flexibility. The Americans felt that NATO militaries needed to be more ready for action. These differing perspectives had surfaced in Rusk's own meeting with Schroeder two days earlier (on October 15).

Going into his meeting with Schroeder, Kennedy understood all this. He also knew that, just the day before (October 16), in addition to the alarming and still secret news about Soviet missiles in Cuba, Ambassador Foy Kohler had cabled a report back from Moscow of a lengthy conversation with Khrushchev. Khrushchev had repeated that the Soviets would make no move on Berlin until after the U.S. midterm elections in November.⁵ As for the U.S. threat to defend access to Berlin with force, Khrushchev commented: "If U.S. doesn't agree [to the Soviet position], that would force Soviets to sign peace treaty [ending Allied rights in Berlin] despite fact U.S. is threatening to start war. [It] must be recog-

4. See State Topol 399, 25 September 1962, in *FRUS*, 15: 327; letter from Kennedy to Adenauer, in "Germany, Security, 10/62-12/62" folder, President's Office Files, Box 117, John F. Kennedy Library.

5. Khrushchev also discussed Cuba, protesting U.S. provocations. Moscow 981, 16 October 1962, *FRUS*, 15: 359-62.

nized that, in our electronic age, when one button is pressed, other button is pressed automatically. There is no sense in dialogue of threats. This is silly policy. So U.S. should take position of reason.”⁶

Kennedy will not say a word about missiles in Cuba to the West German foreign minister. But as the discussion slowly comes to the heart of the matter—U.S. readiness to threaten war in taking a rigid stance on Allied rights (as on the visa issue he knows Schroeder will emphasize⁷)—the Soviet missiles in Cuba cannot be far from Kennedy’s thoughts.

Schroeder spoke English reasonably well. So while he used his translator to be sure he expressed himself clearly, the translator did not bother to translate what Kennedy said.

President Kennedy: Mr. Minister, would you care for some coffee or orange juice?

Gerhard Schroeder: Oh, I’d prefer tea, if [*unclear*].

President Kennedy: [*to others*] Coffee? Tea?

Unidentified: Tea.

President Kennedy: [*on phone*] Maybe we can get three or four teas and three or four coffees and a cup of orange juice?

[*aside, to someone else*] . . . Yes, I left them on the table in my, on the desk in my office.

[*turns to Schroeder*] Well, I’m glad to see you, Mr. Minister. You’ve come in a couple of times, but . . . We have pretty strong feelings, as you’re aware, that we’re going to have great difficulty with Berlin in the next few months. And I wanted to, first, to see what your thought was about what the Soviet schedule might be, and what actions they were most likely to take. I thought you might know what our contingency planning is to deal with those actions.

Schroeder: If you’ll allow me to speak German and get translated, it makes a big difference.

Zunächst [*unclear*] für die Gelegenheit danken, das wir hier zusammen sind, insbesondere herzliche Grüße des Bundeskanzlers überbringen, der sich freut, Sie in ein Paar Wochen zu sehen. Und ich betrachte diese Reise als eine sehr nützliche Vorbereitung, auch für den Besuch, den der Bundeskanzler machen wird.

6. Moscow 981, 16 October 1962, in *FRUS*, 15: 360.

7. Bundy warned Kennedy that Schroeder would raise the visa issue, during the previous evening’s deliberations on the missiles in Cuba.

Kusterer [*hereinafter referred to as* Translator]: Well, first of all, Mr. President, I would like to thank you very much indeed for the opportunity which you provide us [to] meet with you. And I'd like to extend to you the most cordial greetings of the chancellor, who is looking forward personally to seeing you in a few weeks' time, and I myself consider my trip to be a quite useful preparation for that very visit.⁸

Schroeder: Nun, dazu ihre Fragen zur Berlin-Situation, zu den möglichen Absichten der anderen Seite und unserer Haltung zu der Vorbereitungsmaßnahmen. Nach unserer Auffassung ist nicht mit Sicherheit zu sagen, ob die Russen tatsächlich die Absicht haben, gegen Ende November, oder gegen Ende des Jahres, die Krise durch eigene Handlung zu verschärfen oder nicht. Wir neigen eher zu der Meinung, daß die Sowjets bei allen versuchen, [*unclear*] Dings psychologischen Druck, auszuüben. Im Gründe darauf [*unclear*] auch sind weiter zu sprechen, und weiter zu versuchen, ihre Ziele ohne Gewalt zu erreichen. Das kann man nicht mit Sicherheit sagen, aber ich glaube, man muß folgende Faktoren in Recht [*unclear*]. Erstens haben die Sowjets, dort wo sie herumgefragt haben, bei den anderen Nationen wenig Unterstützung für den Gedanken des Separatvertrags gefunden. Und einen Separatvertrag zu unterzeichnen, in den sozusagen nur mit der eigenen Firma und ihren Unterfirmen unterzeichnen, ist für die Sowjets nicht so furchtbar reizvoll, denn dann werden sie international keine gute Ausgangsposition haben, um das durchzustehen, was sich daran anschließen könnte. Insoweit würde ich die Haltung der anderen nicht festgelegten Staaten, eher als, von unserem Standpunkt aus, positiv betrachten.

Die weitere Frage ist, welche konkreten Maßnahmen haben die Sowjets etwa in Berlin weiter vor. Die Zahl von Maßnahmen, die sie noch ergreifen könnten, ohne zu einer Konfrontation zu kommen, ist nur noch sehr beschränkt. Es ist nicht mehr viel Spielraum zwischen Dingen, die sie tun können und einer wirklichen, und im Augenblick, einer wirklichen Konfrontation. Deswegen muß man gleichzeitig ins Auge fassen, welche Maßnahmen können etwa die sowjetzonaler Leute ergreifen, nur natürlich abgestimmt mit dem Auftrag mit den Sowjets. Und das bedeutet [*unclear*] gibt es ein Problem, den wir eine besondere Aufmerksamkeit zuwenden müssen. Das ist dieses Problem, ob der Zivilzugang durch weitere Paß—und Visumvorschriften erschwert werden soll. Aber vielleicht darf ich erst einmal.

Translator: Now as to the question of the Berlin situation and the pos-

8. Adenauer had been invited to visit Washington November 7 to 8.

sible Soviet intentions, and also our views as to the contingency planning. In our opinion, it is not certain that the Russians really do have the intention, by the end of November or by end the year, to increase the crisis by any action of their own. We are more inclined to believe that the Soviets, in spite of all attempts to bring psychological pressure to bear, have, in spite of this, they basically continue, and will want to continue, to talk and to try to achieve their objectives without having to resort to force.

Now, of course one cannot be quite sure about this, but I think one should take account of several factors. First of all, the Soviets, in their attempts up to now at getting support from other nations for a separate peace treaty, have so far registered rather little support, and for them to sign a separate treaty only with their own signature, and the signature of their subcontractors [the East Germans and other bloc states], so to speak, isn't really something really much worthwhile, because from the international point of view this would not provide them with any really firm and good point of departure. So I think that the attitude which the noncommitted states have taken so far can really be considered to be positive from our point of view.

Now the further question, of course, is what special measures the Soviets may have in mind over Berlin, and the number of steps which they could still take without coming to the point of confrontation is really rather limited. And there isn't really much more margin for them, for any measures or steps or actions they could take, without coming really close to that point of confrontation. And therefore, it is for us, of course, at the same time necessary to envisage what possible action the Soviet-occupied zone authorities [East Germans] might take, of course, after having received approval from the Soviets. And there's one specific problem which I think we should study, and that is the problem of whether they might try, by the introduction of passport and/or visa requirements, to arrest and interfere with civilian traffic.

Schroeder: Dieser Problem ist, nach meiner Meinung, deswegen so wichtig, weil wir verhindern müssen, daß sich in der Zugangsfrage überhaupt irgendwelche Verschlechterungen gegenüber dem derzeitigen Stand ergeben. Und ist das ja leider eben so, daß diese Fragen dort zum Teil ausgesprochene Papierfragen sind, in dem Sinne, daß wenn man jetzt durch die Zone fahren will, man an den Grenzpunkt ankommt, man sein Personalausweis abgibt, einen Stempel bekommt, und dann durch die—ein Paar Mark bezahlt—und dann durch die Zone durchfährt. Und natürlich könnte die andere Seite dieses Stück so spielen, daß anstatt, daß man ein—zunächst so spielen—daß als man ein Zettel bekommt und dann [den] Ausweis, sie sagen, "Das ist jetzt ein *Visum*, was Sie [*unclear*] bekommen.

Dieses Visum kann man hier bekommen, und dieses Visum kann man auch in Ostberlin beantragen." In anderen Worten, das, was sich hier zunächst einmal für das Auge ändert, ist unter Umständen nicht so furchtbar tiefgreifend. Das ändert sich aber eine *Menge* in der rein rechtlichen Situation, weil nämlich die Visaerteilung eine Geschichte ist, die man ganz nach reinem [*unclear*] kann, es gibt dann keinerlei Anspruch auf ein Visum. Mit anderen Worten, wenn es zu dieser Einführung käme, und [*unclear*] es akzeptieren wollte, würde das praktisch bedeuten, viel stärker als bisher, diesen Landzugang nach Berlin abhängig zu machen von der Sowjetzone, und damit natürlich ihre rechtliche—völkerrechtliche Bedeutung, im Sinne eine Anerkennung, einige Stufen höher gehen.

[*Unclear*] gibt es ein Paar Probleme. Es gibt zum Beispiel das Problem, daß im Verhältnis zu allem anderen ausländischen Verkehr, am Beispiel amerikanischen Zivilverkehr, solche Visa bereits erteilt worden sind, was ein sehr dummer Punkt ist, von unserem Standpunkt aus, bei [*unclear*] Geschichte. Ich will das nicht im Einzelnen darstellen. Ich habe die Überzeugung, daß wenn man irgendwelche weiteren Verschlechterungen des Zivilzugangs findet, man eines Tages an der Stelle ist, wo der militärische Zugang im—in eine ganz große Notenlage gerät dadurch. Das braucht er vielleicht zunächst, nur weitere Papiererfordernisse unterworfen werden soll, und die Weltöffentlichkeit nur sehr schwer verstehen wird, daß wir mal gerade in dem anderen Weg durch sehr viel neue Stempel Papiere hingenommen haben, man für den militärischen Verkehr nicht bereit sein würdest zu tun.

Translator: The question is so important in my mind because we will have to avoid any further deterioration of access as compared to what the present situation is. Unfortunately, most of these questions can easily be *paper* questions, if I may say so, because if now, you want to go through, to transit the Soviet-occupied zone, you drive up to the checkpoint, you give them your identity card—in the civilian field—you give them your identity card, you get it stamped, you pay a few marks' toll, and then you proceed on your way. Now, of course, this could, at least in the beginning, be played by the other side in this way: that instead of giving the passengers a little paper, they will say, "Now what you receive now is a *visa*. This visa can be obtained here at the checkpoint; it can also be applied for in East Berlin." In other words, the visible change isn't really very great, and doesn't visibly reach really far, but it changes, of course, a lot in the legal situation, because a visa is, of course, something which you're at complete liberty to issue or to deny. And in other words, if the visa was introduced and accepted, this would really mean that demand access, much more than up to now, would be dependent on the discretion

of the . . . or left to the discretion of Soviet-occupied zone, and this would by inference mean some further steps in recognition in—under international law.

Now, there are some problems connected with that type of thing. For example, the problem that, so far as other foreign civilian traffic is concerned, it appears that even up to this point, visas have already been accepted for American civilian travelers, for instance, which of course is a rather unfortunate point in this matter. Now, I don't want to go into any detail, but I am *convinced* that if one would accept any deterioration of the civilian access, this might [*unclear*] place oneself one day in a spot insofar as military access is concerned, because if, in the field of military access also some paper formalities were introduced, it would really be difficult to reject them, especially in the eyes of world opinion. And it would be very difficult for world opinion to understand why one has just accepted the same thing in the civilian field, and why now suddenly this is such an impossible thing to accept in the military field.

Schroeder: Die Sowjets werden ja, wenn die klug sind, und sie sind ganz bestimmt sehr klug, das ganze Spiel so spielen, daß sie es möglichst nicht gegen die Weltmeinung zu spielen brauchen, und daß sie es möglichst ohne Einsatz von eigener Gewalt spielen können. Das kann zum Beispiel folgendermaßen aussehen, wenn ich das einmal an einem hypothetischen Beispiel darstellen darf. Nehmen wir an, die Sowjets würden unterzeichnen am ersten Dezember einen Friedensvertrag in dem alle Bestimmungen über Berlin darin stünden, die Alliierten dürfen dort nicht länger sein, alle Befugnisse gehen nach Pankow über, und so weiter. Und sie würden sagen, "Dieser Friedensvertrag tritt in Kraft am ersten Januar 1963, und wir brauchen eine Übergangszeit für ein halbes Jahr, während die westlichen Alliierten noch in Berlin bleiben. Sie werden aber ein anderes Papier als bisher brauchen, um nach Berlin zu kommen. Diese Papiere werden in Pankow ausgestellt, aber da wir großzügige Leute sind, sind wir auch bereit, sie an den Übergangsstellen auszustellen. Dort sind die Papiere bereits vorbereitet, und dieses Verfahren tritt am ersten Januar in Kraft."

Was tut man dann auf der westlichen Seite, in der Zeit vom ersten Dezember bis zum ersten Januar? Und was tut man wenn der erste Januar herangekommen ist? Vor allendings was wird die Weltöffentlichkeit sagen? Was soll man tun am ersten Januar? Soll man am ersten Januar nur noch mit Gewalt durchfahren? Oder wird die Weltöffentlichkeit nicht sagen, "Nun, also, ihr habt schon doch so viele Stempel hingenommen, in der [*unclear*] hat sich nicht viel geändert." Mit anderen Worten, man braucht eine Haltung die den Sowjets *ganz* klar macht, daß sie mit dem Versuch,

dieses Spiel [*unclear*] Rattenweise zu spielen, eben nicht durchkommen werden. Und deswegen, eben glaube ich, muß man im Grunde anfangen, bereits das Problem der etwa des [*unclear*] Zivilverkehrs, ganz energisch zu behandeln.

Translator: Now if the Soviets are shrewd people, and they certainly are, they will play the game, if ever possible, *not* against world opinion, and they will play that game if possible without having to resort to force. And they *can* do that, for instance, in the following hypothetical case: let us assume that the Soviet Union signs a separate peace treaty on the first of December, a separate treaty which contains all of the provisions which they have announced. That is to say, the Western Allies have no longer any right to be in Berlin, everything is being transferred to Pankow [the East German capital], and so on; that they would further say that this peace treaty will enter into force on the first of January 1963, but that there appears a requirement for a transitional period, and that therefore the Western powers can continue to stay in Berlin for another six months as of the first of January '63. But in order to be able to transit through the Soviet occupied zone, it is required to have a different documentation than up to now. This documentation can be obtained at the checkpoints as well as in Pankow itself. But it can also be obtained at the checkpoints. That they would say these papers would be prepared, and the whole arrangement or procedure would enter into force on the first of January.

The question, of course, arises: What does the West do in the period between the first of December and the first of January? And what does it do on and after the first of January? Especially, what will be the reaction of world opinion if, for instance, the West were to decide that, as from the first of January, the access will be kept open by force? What would world opinion say? It would say, "Well, you've just accepted this stamp, it's not really much of a new requirement, and there hasn't been a lot of change which it would be worthwhile the use of force." In other words, it is necessary for us to have an attitude which makes it *quite* clear to the Soviet Union that any attempt on their part to try and proceed by installments will fail. And therefore, I think that basically we should react very strongly already in the case of any further deterioration of the civilian traffic.

Schroeder: Und [*unclear*] ein Paar Folgerungen. Die eine ist die, daß man in der "contingency planning" auch ein ganz genaue, realistische Betrachtung über etwaiger Erschwerung des Zivilzugangs haben muß. Dafür gibt es verschiedene Varianten, die wir vielleicht jetzt nicht zu erörtern brauchen.

Da gibt's es hier aber zweitens daraus, daß man vom politisch-, diplomatisch-, und psychologischen Standpunkt aus, alles tun muß, um den Sowjets rechtzeitig klar zu machen, daß man nicht die Absicht hat, zum Beispiel die Einführung von Visa hinzunehmen, und daß man darauf mit energischen Mitteln reagieren wird. Das sind die beiden Dinge, die in diesen Zusammenhang von . . . erforderlich sind. Und ich glaube tatsächlich, es gibt eine Art Interdependenz, um den Ausdruck [*Tea is delivered, Schroeder interrupts himself to say "Danke schön."*] zu gebrauchen, zwischen dem zivilen Verkehr und dem militärischen Verkehr, und ich meine, es wird notwendig sein, daß man das bei den ganzen Planung[en] realistisch in Rechnung stellt.

Translator: Now, there are of course some conclusions to be drawn from this situation, and the first conclusion I see is that the contingency planning of course must really realistically consider and take into account any possible deterioration in the field of also civilian access. There are certain numbers of variations that can be imagined, but I don't think it is necessary to go into that detail now.

The second conclusion would be that in the political, diplomatic, and psychological fields, one really must do everything to make it quite clear, to drive it home to the Soviet Union, that we have no intention whatsoever of, for example, accepting the introduction of a visa requirement, but that on the contrary the West would react very strongly to any such move. I think that is necessary, and I further think that there is, to use that term, a clear interdependence between civilian and military traffic, and I think that should be taken into account realistically in our planning.

President Kennedy: Let me say, Mr. Minister, that I agree that there is a clear interdependence between the military and the civilian. There is a substantial difference between them, however, with regards to access. We could always supply ourselves militarily by air if we can't supply the city by ground. Now, in addition, at the present time, as I understand it, the civilian traffic is treated differently than military traffic. The documentation presented by civilian traffic is different from the documentation presented by military traffic. The degree of authority which the East German regime exercises on civilian traffic is different from the authority that they exercise on military traffic. Is this at all true?

Schroeder: Ja, das ist sicherlich, das ist sicherlich so. Aber es kommt eine Stelle, wo die Sache ganz gefährlich wird, wo nämlich weitere Verschlechterung[en] des Zivilverkehrs eine Situation hervorrufen, das macht zunächst geringfügige Verschlechterung, zu optisch geringfügige Verschlechterung des militärischen Verkehrs schwer hinnehmen, schwerer und schwerer ablehnen kann. Und die Frage ist natürlich ob man,

[unclear] gerade bei [unclear] Änderung des zivilen Verkehrs einfach sagen mögen, "Nun, wir akzeptieren das"; oder man sagt, "Wir akzeptieren das unter gar keinen Umständen."

Und wenn wir sagen, "Wir akzeptieren das unter gar keinen Umständen," dann bleibt die Frage: "Was zu tun?" Darauf gibt es eine theoretische Antwort. Man kann sagen, "Nun, das ganze Verkehr aufs Land und Wasser und Straße stoppt, und wir gehen nur durch die Luft." Das mag [unclear] des Personenverkehrs mehr oder weniger möglich sein. Da haben wir bereits große Verzweifeln, da wenn es eine [unclear] elektronische Störung gibt in den Luftwegen, in der schlechten Jahreszeit, und so weiter und so weiter, läßt sich nicht einmal nach unsere [unclear] den Zivilverkehr durch die Luft absichern, von der Güterversorgung ganz zu schweigen. Und im selben Augenblick, das natürlich "viability" von Berlin auch schwerste gefährdet. Wir sind sogar der Meinung, daß bereits die Einführung, auch ohne daß man diese Art von Reaktion wählt, die einfache Einführung des Visumszwangs, der täglich also für—die Visen, die sind täglich erteilt werden, für 20,000 Leute, nicht wahr, daß das bereits eine solche Verlangsamung und Verminderung des Berlinzugangs wird, daß damit einfach eins der Hauptessentials in die "viability" von Berlin auf dem Spiele steht.

Wenn man darauf erstmal reagiert hat, daß man in die Luft gegangen ist, und wirtschaftliche Maßnahmen keine Wirkung auslösen, muß man unter Umständen unter schweren schweren [unclear] Verlust, und da wer weiß welchen Konzessionen, dabei wieder zurückgehen. Deswegen ist es eine sehr weittragende Frage, wie man sich einstellt bei der Visaerteilung.

Die Linien, die man da bei Verkehrssteuerung wohl über zieht, daß man den lebensnotwendigen Verkehr nach Berlin weiter gehen läßt und ihn im Grunde für ihn das Visaerfordernis akzeptiert, die Bevölkerung aufruft, alle unnötigen Reisen zu hinterlassen und den Luftweg dafür zu benutzen, gleichzeitig wirtschaftliche Maßnahmen zu ergreifen. Dies ist eine mittlere Lösung; ob man mit einer solchen mittleren Lösung wirklich durchkommen würde, daß mag zweifelhaft sein. Ich meine, aber, daß die Planung, gleich würdig ob man einen milden oder einen sehr strengen Standpunkt wählt, tatsächlich noch einmal auf das Genaueste durchgedacht werden muß, und so daß man ein [unclear] stellen muß, wie man sich verhalten wird.

Vor allendingen, auch mit den Berlinern. Denn hier gibt es ein Bißchen eine Verschiedenheit der Betrachtung, die aus eine gewissen Verschiedenheit der Interessen stammt. Die Berliner brauchen die Anerkennungsproblem und die Gesamtdeutschen Probleme nicht als ihre unmittelbare Hauptsorge anzusehen. Die Berliner sehen den möglichst unbehinderten Zugang nach

Berlin als ihre Hauptsorge an, aber die Auseinandersetzung geht in dem Grunde über Berlin hinaus, in dieser Sache, so daß es nicht—die Interessen hier—nicht ganz identisch sind. Und man muß versuchen, diese Interessen auf einem Punkt zu bringen, damit sie ungefähr harmonisiert [sind].

Translator: Well, that's certainly true. But the point comes where it would be very dangerous to have accepted already a further deterioration in the civilian traffic, because this would place us in a situation where optically minor changes in the field of military traffic would be very difficult to reject. And the question of whether we say, if there's any further deterioration of civilian traffic, the question now is, whether we say, "Okay, we will acquiesce in it," or whether we say we are not going to accept that in any way.

If we say we are not going to accept that in any way, we of course have to ask ourselves what are we going to do? There is a theoretical answer, the theoretical answer being that surface transport to Berlin would come to an end. Now, there *may* be a possibility of ensuring more or less the transportation of personnel from and to Berlin by air, but even there we have our doubts insofar as bad seasons, any serious electronic interference is concerned, leaving completely aside the question of goods transportation, which we do not think it will be possible to carry out by air. And then, of course, we've reached a point where viability is really seriously affected. We even think that the simple introduction of visa, the very fact that a visa requirement would be introduced, would mean that *per day* 20,000 visas would have to be issued for people traveling to and from Berlin. And this fact in itself would already slow down and reduce the Berlin access. So really, [*unclear*] there's one essential, that is, viability, which really is at stake if anything of the kind happened.

If we move, lift the traffic up into the air, and if the economic countermeasures we take do not have the effect which we are thinking of, then we might well find ourselves at the point where, at the price of high concessions and high loss of prestige, we would have to come back from that stand which we have taken. So the question, of course, of how we react to these requirements is, I think, extremely important.

The line which has been followed in planning up to now is that the vital surface transport would continue and that one would, for that purpose, accept the visa, at the same time appealing to the population not to do any unnecessary surface travel, and at the same time, of course, introducing economic countermeasures. Now, this is an intermediate solution. The question as to whether it will have the result which we are expecting it to have is, of course, an open one. But I think that, at any rate, whether

one will in the final analysis come to a more restricted or a very strict reaction in the planning stage, it is necessary to rethink very hard the whole planning and to come to agreement as to how we will really act.

We also, especially, have to come some agreement on that point with the Berliners, because there is some difference in the perspective between, and some difference of *interests* between, the Berliners and the Federal Republic as such. The problem of—

Schroeder: [*interrupting translator*] Or the Western position as such.

Translator: Or the Western position as such, thank you. The problem of recognition and the problem of all-German policy is not felt by the Berliners as their really direct concern and really immediate concern. The Berliners think that their immediate and direct concern, of course, is the unrestricted access, but the problem itself, of course, and all the implications reach far beyond Berlin alone, so there is not quite the same interest with the western Berliners and with the West, and therefore it is necessary for us to try to bring these interests to a certain point.

President Kennedy: Mr. Minister, if you . . . if they insist on these visas, and then West Germans going in, or traffic, say that they won't submit to them, and that traffic stops, then where are we?

Schroeder: Das bedeutet—im Grunde, bedeutet das Ganze die Frage, ob man ins Auge fassen will, oder ins Auge fassen kann, und ich stelle das nur als eine Frage, den Landzugang nach Berlin vom ersten Augenblick, an dem ernsthaft blockiert wird, wirklich mit Gewalt offenzuhalten, oder ob man, die ganze Gedankenführung so ordentlich, daß man sagt, "Lassen wir das Land, nehmen wir die Luft, und warten wir ab die Wirtschaftsmaßnahmen und der Gleichen wirken."

Ich glaube, und das sage ich aus meiner persönlichen Meinung, daß es eine sehr gefährliche Vorstellung wäre, mich darauf einzulassen, daß man das Problem durch Ausweichen in die Luft [*unclear*] zu lösen [*unclear*].

Translator: Basically the question of course is—and I am only raising the question without trying to give an answer now to it—but basically the question is whether we *will* and whether we *can*, in case the land access is harassed, whether we will and whether we can, from the first moment of such blockage onward, keep that access open by force, or whether we will say, "Well, let's drop the land traffic, the surface traffic, and let's lift it up into the air and wait for the effect of the economic countermeasures."

Now, I personally believe that it would be really dangerous to think that the problem could be solved by simply lifting up the traffic into the air.

President Kennedy: Well, I think that we discussed what action we would take if there was a forcible blockage of traffic on the ground. The

only question would be whether the blockage took place because of the, of a paper barrier rather than one of arms or force. Whether we, in that case, would be warranted, if the blockage is by paper, warranted taking the force if we didn't like the kind of visa or the kind of papers which were being requested of the civilian traffic.

Schroeder: Aber wir sind—das Problem ist gerade, wenn man das hier nicht tut, obwohl die "viability" von Berlin im Grunde daran hängt, welche Chance hat man, sich bei, dann denn für den militärischen Verkehr, nur in Anführungszeichen das Erfordernis, von etwas mehr Papier gestellt wird, zu sagen, "Dies aber ist eine gewaltsame Stelle."

Translator: Well, Mr. President, the question of course arises, if one doesn't do it at that stage, at that point, although viability is involved, what are our chances of doing it when, in the military field *only*, some paper requirement, new paper requirement is introduced? What chance do we then stand to reply, to react by force?

President Kennedy: Well, I would think it does raise the question of whether any sort of paper documentation which we would accept in the civilian traffic. I say, military traffic you can always move by air, so that you don't have quite the same problem. But the civilian traffic you can't move by air, so civilian traffic as a *practical* matter is basically a different problem. If you're going to say that you're not going to have any civilian traffic submit to these visas, and you can't carry the civilian traffic by air, then you're going to have, in a sense, a blockade of Berlin imposed by us. And with all the difficulties that would come upon the city, with the city not wholly sympathetic to that position, vis-à-vis arguing that this is an unreasonably legalistic position that we've taken, it seems to me that that may end up in a somewhat more . . . slightly ambiguous position than we would if we said, "Well, we don't accept this authority, but if it's a matter of moving civilian traffic in and out, we would agree." [*Unclear.*]

Schroeder: Ich meine es liegt auf der Hand, das wird eine sehr schwierige Frage ist, aber die hängt im—einfach eben damit zusammen, und das gilt nach meiner Meinung eben vor Allendingen auch für den militärischen Verkehr, ob man sich gegenüber dem militärischen Verkehr vorstellen, "Nun, wir können die Luft ausweichen." Oder man sagt, "Dies ist ein lebenswichtiges Problem, oder ein militärisch-lebenswichtiges Problem, den Landverkehr aufrecht zu erhalten."

Ich sage ihnen ganz offen, ich würde der Auffassung sein, daß es ein militärisch-lebenswichtiges Problem ist, den Landverkehr offen zu halten, um mich nicht damit mit zu vergnügen, daß man in die Luft gehen kann. Ich bin mir ganz darüber klar, daß das schwere Entscheidungen beinhal-

tet, aber unter Umständen ist man ganz anderen Entwicklung entgegen, wenn mal den militärischen Verkehr durch die Luft nimmt, um dann zu sehen, wieviel weiter man kommen wird. Das hat man '48-'49 getan. Und zwar diese Luftbrücke hat es gegeben. Die ist dann schließlich aus einer anderen Situation mehr oder weniger ohne Entscheidung, ohne jedenfalls wirklich wirksame Verbesserung zu schaffen, aufgegeben worden, weil die Interessenlage auf der sowjetischen Seite geändert hat, aber ich würde nicht glauben, daß man heute mit dieser Art von militärischer Aktion wirklich die Auseinandersetzung mit den Sowjets positiv bestehen kann, sondern auf dieser Weise geht man möglicherweise einer schweren politisch-diplomatischen Niederlage entgegen.

Ich habe das Problem eigentlich nur in dieser Schärfe aufgeworfen, damit man [*unclear*] sieht, in welche Lagen man geraten kann, und man muß die möglichen Lagen vorher, glaube ich, absolut realistisch und generalstabsmäßig durchgedacht haben, um nicht eines Tages an einer Stelle zu stehen, wo man, wo das Publikum den Eindruck gewinnt, "ihr habt doch nicht ganz entschlossen gehandelt," weil man versucht [*unclear*] auszuweichen. Die Lösung, die wir jetzt für derzeit [*unclear*], für das Problem des Zivilzugangs, sieht so aus, um es noch einmal zu sagen, daß man sagt, "Nun, der lebenswichtige Verkehr muß weiter gehen. Nimmt die Visa, dafür [*unclear*] unten Potenz [*unclear*]. Macht keine unnötigen Reisen. Wer sonst reisen muß, geht durch die Luft. Wir werden das bezahlen, wir werden das organisieren, und wir werden das finanzieren. Und wir werden dann wirtschaftliche Maßnahmen eintreten lassen." Und Verhinderungen des Interzonenhandels oder Kündigung des Interzonenhandels, entsprechende Handlung der drei Westalliierten, möglichst entsprechende Handlung alle NATO-Partner gerichtet gegen die Sowjetzone.

Aber wenn das nicht den gewünschten Effekt dabei führt, dann bleibt man in der Situation, entweder nur ein[en] begrenzten Berlinverkehr zu haben, oder das Visaerfordernis ganz zu nehmen, und man befindet sich, in der Tat, auf einer gleitenden Skala, die leider nach unten gleitet, und nicht auf einer aufsteigenden [*unclear*] zur Besserung.

Translator: I'm certainly fully aware that this is an extremely difficult problem, and it is connected also especially with the question [of] whether in the military field, military traffic, one will want to take a decision *then* in case of any such introduction, also in the military field, to lift it up into the air, or whether it is considered vital—also militarily vital—to keep land access open. I frankly believe that it is also militarily vital to keep the land access open and not simply try and lift everything up into the air.

I am, of course, aware that this implies a very heavy and very difficult decision, but it is possible that if one goes into the air and says, "Well, let's see how we can get along," we might be placed before different developments, which might place us rather in a spot. Now there was, of course, the airlift in 1948–49, and under a different situation it more or less came back on the surface without any effective improvement. And it came back because the interests for the Soviet side had changed. But I do *not* think that now, with any such military action as taken in '48–'49, it will be possible for us to really meet the Soviet challenge. But [instead] we may be well in for a major diplomatic and political defeat.

Having raised the question . . . and I only want to see that every possible development, every possible situation is really thought about in a war-gaming manner, if I may say, so as not one day to find oneself in a position where the public would gain the impression that after all they [the Western allies] are not so very firm, firmly resolved and they are trying to evade the problems. The solution which up to now has been, to repeat that, which up to now has been envisaged for any such deterioration of civilian traffic was that the vital traffic would continue, that under protest one would accept the visa, that one would appeal to the population not to do any unnecessary travel, that the necessary travel would have to be financed and lifted up into the air, and that economic countermeasures would be taken by us insofar as the interzonal trade is concerned, either diminishing or completely renouncing it, and corresponding action, economic counteraction, by the three Western powers and possibly by all NATO members.

But if all these measures remained without effect, then of course we would be in a situation where we would either have reduced access to Berlin or we would have to accept all the visa requirements for all the traffic, and we would find ourselves suddenly on a declining gliding scale.

President Kennedy: I don't know, Mr. Minister, if the question of the visas is the . . . if we should make this the great issue, whether we can win that fight [*unclear*]. That's the problem. We don't want to have a diplomatic defeat. We don't want to have Berlin isolated either, because of the forcible blockade of their own or because of a decision of ours not to move. And the question really is as to whether a visa is the issue upon which to *hang* our use of force, your use of economic countermeasures and your use of force with us. Can we justify—we're talking about opinion in the world—fighting our way up the autobahn because they won't give a visa? When [*unclear*]*—when, after all, civilian traffic has been submitting itself to being stamped? That's a pretty sophisticated—*

Schroeder: Das ist in der [*unclear*], aber die *ganze* Schwierigkeit der

Auseinandersetzung der Berlinfrage mit der Sowjets liest leider in dieser Art von Dingen—man hat das immer mit der Salami verglichen—ich habe das Beispiel nie sehr schön gefunden, weil es aus der Lebensmittelbranche stammt—aber die ganze Schwierigkeit ist natürlich, daß man hier ein Stück weiter und weiter und weiter gedrückt wird, bis man an einer Stelle ist, wo die Anderen [*unclear*], “Das habt [*unclear*] alles schon getan. Sollte das noch eine—soll das nicht auch noch gehen?” Und deswegen ist man dabei, dieses Paket sozusagen stückweise zu verlieren, ohne das sich bedeutende Dinge eigenen.

Die Schwierigkeit liegt, nach meiner Meinung, in gerade, in politisch-psychologischen Dingen. Wie das ganze Berlinproblem, letztlich noch, so wie es jetzt steht, eher auch ein großer politisch-, diplomatisch-, psychologischer Krieg ist, als ein militärischer Krieg ist. Und auf unserer Seite muß Folgendes gelten: Wie reagiert die Bevölkerung wenn wir wieder eine neue Sache hinnehmen müssen? Ist das—ermutigt das die Bevölkerung? Oder *entmutigt* das die Bevölkerung? Die Antwort ist klar. Es müßte die Bevölkerung *entmutigen*. Das ist ganz sicher, [*unclear*] sagen ein Schritt weiter bergab. Ob der Schritt groß ist oder klein ist, spielt keine Rolle. Und es bedeutet für Pankow, wenn sein Visarecht anerkannt ist, ein Stück weiter Bergauf. Das kann man, glaube ich, nicht verzweifeln.

Nun, man kann versuchen, das noch mit ein Kompromiß zu überbieten. Die zweite Frage ist, wie reagieren die Sowjets darauf? Was bedeutet das, da dies ja alle Stücke sowjetischer Strategie sind? Was bedeutet es für die Sowjets? Es bedeutet für die Sowjets einen gewissen weiteren Erfolg—mit anderen Worten, ein Stückchen Ermutigung.

Und Berlin kann überhaupt nur dadurch gehalten werden, daß die Sowjets die Überzeugung haben, “Hier gibt es irgendwo, ohne das wir das genau wissen, wir die Sowjets, eine unübersteigbare Grenze, die wir unter gar keinen Umständen übersteigen können. Das wissen die Sowjets. Ich bin der Überzeugung, daß Khrushchev seinerseits überzeugt ist, daß [es] gewisse Dinge gibt, für die, die Amerikaner und [*unclear*], die der Westen wirklich kämpfen würde. Er muß nur die Partie so spielen, daß man sozusagen weiter und weiter eingeengt ist, ohne reagiert zu haben. Und dann hat er natürlich in dieser psychologischen Auseinandersetzung [*unclear*] einen großen Erfolg erhoben.

Es ist nicht, nach meiner Meinung, also *nicht*, daß die Sowjets wissen, unter bestimmten Umständen würde man kämpfen. Das wissen sie, und das glauben sie auch. Sie glauben sogar, das man ein Nuklearkrieg wegen Berlin riskieren wird, obwohl ihnen—den Sowjets—das ziemlich verrückt erscheint. Aber sie glauben das. Aber sie werden ihre eigenen

politisch-diplomatisch-psychologischen Möglichkeiten daran erlauben, wie wir diese anderen Fragen behandeln. Und deswegen ist es eben so wichtig, obwohl das nun ein Visum ist oder nicht, daß diese Frage—ich will jetzt nur einmal sagen—mit dem größtmöglichen Nachdruck behandelt wird, und nicht angesehen wird, als eine Frage, ein Stück Papier wird.

Translator: Now, that certainly is quite true, but the difficulty over all this Berlin conflict with the Soviets is that . . . well, it has always been compared to a salami—an example which I never liked very much because it comes out of a food store—but really the difficulty is that piece by piece and little by little, one is being maneuvered into a point where everybody will say, “Now you’ve accepted all that already, why should just *this* little thing not be possible for you to accept?” And *that* is the, really, the problem for us, that we might well lose this whole game by installments without there ever occurring any major event, or having occurred any major event. But the game would still be lost.

And the difficulty, in my opinion, really lies in this political and psychological field. Quite as Berlin, quite generally, is as of now much more a political, psychological, diplomatic war than it is a military one. And for us, it is also important what the reaction of the people will be when we acquiesce in the next minor change in, deterioration in access. Will it be encouraging for the—will our reaction be encouraging or discouraging for the population? And I think the answer to that one is quite clear: It will discourage them, and it will be considered as a further step, small as it may be, on the declining scale. And to Pankow [the East German capital], of course, the recognition of its visa requirement would undoubtedly be one step up. There can be no doubt about this.

Now, of course one can try to avoid this by finding a compromise, but the second question involved is of course also: What will the Soviet reaction be? Because all this is part of a more comprehensive Soviet strategy. And what does our reaction to any such move mean to them? And it means, of course, some success to them, and that means encouragement to them.

Now, Berlin can only be held if the Soviets can be convinced, and are convinced, that there is some specific point—without our wanting to be forced or being able to say in this discussion now which that point should be—but somewhere there is this point which we will not go beyond, and beyond which we will not accept any [*unclear*]. And the Soviets certainly know that. I’m convinced that Khrushchev himself is convinced that there are some things at points which the U.S. and the West will fight. But of course, he will try to play this game in such a way as to whittle down our freedom of action without our reacting to every slice that is torn off, and that would, of course, mean success to him, psychologically.

I don't think it's enough, really, for the Soviets only to know that under certain circumstances we will fight. They *do* know that. They even believe that we're going to wage a nuclear war over Berlin, although from their point of view this looks a rather crazy decision to take. But they still believe that we will wage a nuclear war over Berlin if necessary. But their own intentions, or their further moves, of course depend on how we deal with the precedent, or how we have dealt with the precedent move. *Now* the question is really so vitally important, now, whether this is the visa or whether it is something else. But it is not *merely* a paper requirement. It really goes much further than that.

President Kennedy: Well, I understand the difficulty, but you have to make some decisions in the next three or four weeks about the matter.

I know this argument about salami, and what point we draw the line. I agree that that's important. I just think we ought to make sure that in our desire to demonstrate some firmness, that we don't draw the line at the wrong place. The civilian traffic at the present time accepts East German control. That traffic submits its documents to the East German authorities. They stamp the documents—that's a kind of acquiescence in their authority. The degree of difference between that kind of acquiescence and acquiescence in the acceptance of a different paper doesn't seem to me to be dramatic enough to hang all of our future on that issue.

The West German government has made it clear it's not going to recognize [East Germany]. All the rest of us [in the Alliance] have. Whether we therefore want to set in train all the reactions on this question of a difference in the paper, I think, is a matter that we ought to make up our mind about very shortly. If we *make* it the important issue and then acquiesce, then it's going to be a major defeat. [*Schroeder interjects: "No."*] If we say that we would accept East Germans on the checkpoints, and that this . . . we'll sign these papers which we don't have any regard for, and which have no standing, then it will become less important. So we've got to decide in advance whether we want to make it important or whether we want to attempt to downgrade it and regard the actual movement in and out as the key issue.⁹

Schroeder: Ich möchte nur einen Satz noch zu diesen Problemen sagen. Es ist eben doch ein ganz großer Unterschied, ob ich an einen Grenzpunkt

9. Acceptance of East Germans at the checkpoints as surrogates or agents of the Soviet Union, in contrast to accepting them as representatives of a sovereign East Germany, had been a little-known part of contingency planning since 1954. But this practice was discarded in 1958, when leaders and the public became aware of it.

heranfähre und dort eine Sache abgestempelt wird, und ich durchfähre, oder aber, ob man das tun kann, was die Leute ohne weiteres tun können, sagen "Alle Visa gibt es überhaupt nur noch in Ostberlin. Oder wir sind bereit auf Eurem Boden Visabureaus zu eröffnen, zum Beispiel in West Berlin." In anderen Worten, die Zone kommt durch das anerkannte Visaerföhrdnis in eine ganz andere Lage, darauf zu sagen, "Wir geben im Monat überhaupt nur 50,000 Visen." Und was machen wir dann? Mit anderen Worten, sie könnten sowohl die *Zahl* der Visen als den *Ort* der Visaerteilung feststellen. Von daran eine Menge Förderung knüpfen, die angeblich entgegenkommen sein sollen, in Westdeutschland oder in West Berlin Visastellen zu eröffnen. Das ist die [*unclear*] Gefahr, die hinter dieser Sache liegt.

Translator: I just wanted to add one point, Mr. President, on this issue. There is, of course, a big difference of whether you drive up to a checkpoint and you get your stamp and then you proceed, or whether they can do—the Soviet-occupied Zone people [East Germans] can do what they certainly could do to say that visas can only be issued in East Berlin. Or they say, "We'll be very generous; we'll make it easy for you. We'll open visa-issuing agencies in West Berlin," for instance.

Schroeder: Or in West Germany.

Translator: Or in West Germany. In other words, the zone really comes into a completely different situation. They might as well say, "We'll only issue 50,000 visas per month." And they can fix the number, fix the place and connect it up with other demands that are worse. Under the label of being very generous, saying, "We'll open up these visa-issuing agencies—"

President Kennedy: [*interrupting*] But I would assume that under those conditions the economic countermeasures that we would take would be sufficiently oppressive to them that this kind of action, which is rather superficial, would not be useful to them.

Schroeder: Das ist die Frage, wie weit wirtschaftliche Maßnahmen dabei wirksam sind. Ehrlich gesagt, bin ich von der Wirksamkeit der wirtschaftlichen Maßnahmen dann nicht überzeugt, wenn die andere Seite bereit ist, das Risiko zu laufen. Dann wenn sie—die andere Seite bereit ist, das Risiko zu laufen, dann kann sie die wirtschaftlichen Maßnahmen dann sich hinnehmen. Ich würde jedenfalls davor warnen, zu glauben, daß wirtschaftlicher Druck genügte, um die gewünschten Veränderungen hervorzurufen.

Translator: Berlin, of course, is at risk as to how far the economic countermeasures will be effective. Quite honestly, I'm not convinced that

they are effective *if* the other side is prepared to really run the risk. Then they can certainly put up with everything we can do in the field of economic countermeasures. So I would rather warn to the belief that economic countermeasures alone, and in themselves, will be sufficiently effective.

President Kennedy: Let me say, there's a couple of other matters which . . . I appreciate the Minister's discussion.

Schroeder: Well, I'm sorry they're just a little bit long on this. [*Kennedy interjects*: "No, no, but I—"] I think it's very important we both get to make a start with it—

President Kennedy: I want . . .

Unidentified: Go on.

President Kennedy: The other question is on this matter of the negotiations with . . . these discussions which have been carried on with [Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei] Gromyko, which so far have been unsuccessful. Since last spring [spring of 1962], the Communist insistence on the withdrawal of Western troops from Berlin, of course, has meant that nothing has proceeded.

Now, it may be they won't always stay on that, that they'll withdraw that condition and come back again to access and boundaries and atomic weapons and all these other matters which were discussed some months ago before they got on this other matter. Do you have any thoughts about . . . particularly . . . I don't see why Mr. Khrushchev would want to come over here and talk about Berlin if all he's going to talk about is what we've been very clear is not a matter that is subject to negotiation.

Schroeder: Nach meiner Meinung ist erstens noch nicht ganz sicher, ob Khrushchev wirklich kommen wird, und kommen will. Khrushchev hat diese Besuchsankündigung, nach meiner Meinung hervorragend benutzt, um den Westen mit Spekulation zu beschäftigen. Aber, deswegen weiß ich nicht ob er es wirklich tun wird. Ich will nur einmal annehmen, daß er es tatsächlich vor hat.

Dann würde ich es als ein Zeichnen dafür ansehen, daß er nicht geneigt ist, den sagen Sie mal härtesten Kurs zu steuern. Er müßte, also, schon kommen, in der Erwartung, daß man irgendwelche Dinge arrangieren kann. Khrushchev—wir haben das in Genf gesehen im März, und wir haben das in Juli gesehen mit Gromyko—man wird das—Sie werden das vielleicht morgen Nachmittag wieder sehen—haben in der Tat den scheidenden Punkt daraus gemacht, westliche Anwesenheit in Berlin. Wir haben [*unclear*]*—*die Sowjets haben sich ein Bißchen zu optimistisch ausgedrückt, darüber, daß man sich über Grenzen, Demarkationslinien,

Nichtangriffspakte, Nuklearfragen, und so weiter geeinigt hätte. Nach meiner Meinung, haben wir [*unclear*] doch keineswegs über diese Fragen geeinigt, die Sowjets stellen es aber so dar, durch diplomatische Kanälen, als ob man sich in diesen Fragen geeinigt hätte.

Stellen Sie sich mal auf den Standen der Sowjets, man hätte sich in diesen Fragen geeinigt, dann möchten Sie im Grunde annehmen, daß die Sowjets weiter den Versuch machen werden, über die Anwesenheit des Westens in Berlin sozusagen eine Verständigung auf gleichender Skala, anbei zu verführen. Nach meiner Meinung war das im Grunde deutlich zu sehen in Genf, daß sie im Grunde folgende Fragen gestellt haben, "Wie lange wollt ihr in Berlin bleiben? Wollt ihr ewig in Berlin bleiben?" Dann haben die Sowjets den Vorschlag gemacht, "Also, man halte die Hälfte Eurer Truppen vier Jahre da, nimmt dazu noch einige Polen, Tschechen, und einige Dänen und Holländer, vermindert diese Sachen jedes Jahr um ein Viertel, und nach Vier Jahre werde die Sache erledigt." Ich bin der Überzeugung, daß die Sowjets tatsächlich geglaubt haben, daß sei eine weitere Kompromißangebot. Ich gehe davon aus, daß das, was sie im November '58 gesagt haben, "Nun, schön, also, machen wir in Berlin Status quo in Berlin. Machen wir [*unclear*] entmilitarisierten Stadt." Daß sie sich das vorgestellt haben, als eine Kompromißangebot, was ihnen das Gesicht wahren, wie es [*unclear*] das Gesicht wahren [*unclear*].

Sie sehen, diese Angebot ist nicht angenommen worden, und ich halte im Grunde für möglich, daß sie noch weiter arbeiten an einer in ihren Augen—nicht in unseren Augen—Kompromißangebot zu sagen, "Nun, wenn Ihr nicht Vier Jahre bleibt, vielleicht bleibt Ihr acht Jahre, oder neun Jahre, oder zehn Jahre, oder sechs Jahre, oder was immer." Ich würde glauben, daß Khrushchev eine Anstrengung in dieser Richtung, und ein Erfolg in dieser Richtung, sehr, sehr viel lieber wäre, als das er Berlins wegen jetzt ein noch höheres Risiko laufen muß. Mit anderen Wörtern, ich glaube, daß Khrushchev, wenn er kommen sollte, im Grunde eher kommen wird mit dem Versuch, sozusagen, nach einem Kompromiß, der nicht angenommen worden ist, eine Art zweiten Kompromiß versucht. Aber daß ist meine persönliche Auffassung. Das kann man wie immer, wie alles was die Sowjets tun werden, nicht wirklich beweisen.

Translator: Now in my opinion, first of all, I would like to say that I am not sure in any way, either in the negative nor in the positive way, whether Khrushchev will or will not come. I think he has very extremely skillfully used that announcement to get the press to indulge in all sorts of speculation, and that is why I'm not quite sure that he will come.

But just for the sake of argument, let's assume he will come. And if he does, I would consider that as some indication that he is perhaps not really coming along with the intention of going the toughest course. So he would probably come expecting that something could be arranged. Now, we have seen this in Geneva in March, and also in July with Gromyko—you'll probably have the same experience tomorrow, Mr. President, [in your meeting] with him [Gromyko]—that Khrushchev and the Soviets have always made the crucial point, or the *only* point really for them, was the Western presence in Berlin.¹⁰ And in my opinion the Soviet Union has been a little too optimistic in its utterings about boundaries, demarcation lines, nonaggression pacts, nuclear weapons, acting as though all this was practically and virtually settled and agreed, while in my opinion there is certainly not yet any agreement on these questions. But in their view in the diplomatic, through diplomatic channels, the Soviets present it as though these matters had already been agreed.

Now, putting myself in the Soviets' place for a moment, if all this . . . and taking it as they do, that all this is practically arranged and agreed, then I would rather think that the Soviets would continue to try via the, or [unclear] concerning, the Western presence in Berlin, to come to an understanding on a sort of gliding scale. In my opinion, this has been quite clear in Geneva, where they raised the question, "How long do you want to stay in Berlin? Do you want to stay in Berlin forever?" And then they suggested that the forces in Berlin should be reduced by one-half, and for the next four years we would add some Poles, Czechs, Danes, and Dutch [troops], and we would reduce it by 25 percent each year, and after a period of four years, that's the end of it. Now I'm convinced that the Soviets, from their point of view, really thought that this was a compromise offer. And I even think that the November '58 proposal of Khrushchev's to turn Berlin into a free and demilitarized city was, in their eyes, a compromise offer intended to serve as a face-saver for both sides.

Now they've seen that this offer has not been accepted, and therefore

10. Schroeder is referring to the major talks on Berlin between Rusk and Gromyko, in Geneva, in March and July 1962. On both occasions the Soviets had pressed the issue of the Western troop presence in Berlin very hard, reinforced by secret letters sent to Kennedy from Khrushchev. It was after the July 1962 round of meetings that Khrushchev began telling U.S. diplomats and visitors that it was "clear our dialogue was coming to [an] end." He would have to proceed to settle the Berlin matter without being intimidated any longer by U.S. threats. See, for example, Ambassador Llewellyn Thompson's conversation with Khrushchev recounted in Moscow 228, 26 July 1962, in *FRUS*, 15: 253.

I think that they simply continue to work on what *they* consider—we certainly would not, of course—but what *they* consider to be a compromise proposal, where they would say, “Well, if it’s not four years, it may be six, or ten, or eight years, or something of that sort.” So I think that really Khrushchev would simply prefer to see his effort in that direction crowned by success than at the present moment to run any higher risk in Berlin. And therefore, I believe that if he comes, having seen that one compromise has not been accepted, what they consider to be a compromise, he may come along with a second one. Now this is, of course, my very personal opinion. As in everything that has to do with the Soviets, there’s no possibility of proving that one is right.

Schroeder: [*adding to translator’s words*] At least not beforehand. [*Laughter.*]

President Kennedy: Well I agree there are. . . . I think Mr. [Foy] Kohler [U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union] yesterday was given the impression that we had practically agreed on a nuclear test ban, except for a few minor details which I am sure are unimportant. Well, I, Mr. Minister, I think we . . . I don’t know why Mr. Gromyko wants to see us tomorrow. I’m seeing him tomorrow, and I don’t know what proposal he’ll have in regard to Khrushchev, to the possibility of coming, or what discussion he wants on Berlin.

The other problem which we have . . . I think we ought to get this question of visas settled between the British and French and you and us.

Schroeder: And the Berliners, too.

President Kennedy: And the West Berliners, before the end of the month. I know you feel very strongly about it. I think we ought to get it loud and clear ourselves, all of us. I suppose the Ambassadorial Group is [*unclear*].¹¹

Schroeder: Yes.

President Kennedy: My impression was that we had more or less come to some conclusion. What had we settled in that conference in the last year, 18 months—

Unidentified: I’m not sure at all, Mr. President, but this has been discussed.

Schroeder: Wenn sie mir erlauben, daß mal zu sagen, Herr President, wenn man ein oder zwei Jahre geplant hat, und immer wieder geplant

11. Kennedy is referring to the Washington Ambassadorial Group, a working group of representatives from the United States, Britain, France and West Germany that regularly met to discuss Berlin and German issues.

hat, dann liegt die Gefahr sehr nah, daß der Plan ein Bißchen auseinander läuft, und ich glaube, wir sind jetzt in einem Stadium, in dem man sich das alles noch einmal neu ansehen muß, und das ganz realistisch und klar auf die [unclear] und Annahmen bringen muß, um zu sehen, was der Kern der ganzen Geschichte ist. Ich habe gestern mit dem Secretary of Defense gesprochen, und er war offenbar sehr klar der Meinung, daß man diese ganze Planung jetzt einmal, sozusagen auf dem neuesten Stand überholen, und daß mal Stromlinien—der Ausdruck ist von mir—etwas Stromlinien [unclear] sein muß.

Translator: If you'll permit me to say this, Mr. President, if one has been going on planning and replanning for one or two years, of course, there is the danger that the harmonization is not 100 percent between the various stages of the plans. And therefore I think that we have reached a point where the whole thing should be reexamined and brought up to date under the most realistic and sober consideration, and to really try to find what is the crux of the matter. Yesterday I had a really interesting talk with Mr. McNamara, and he rather was of the opinion, it seemed to me, that really this planning should be brought up to date, and—that's not a term he used, but I would use it—should be streamlined.

Schroeder: Darf ich nur einen Satz dazu [unclear]. Ich [unclear] die Meinung, man muß diese ganzen Möglichkeiten noch einmal wieder richtig wie Kriegsspiele hin und her spielen, und da wird es gut sein, die klügsten Leute die wir haben, die Sowjets spielen zu lassen.

Translator: May I add just one sentence? I am of the opinion that all of these various contingencies should be played through in a sort of war game, and then it would be quite good to have the most intelligent [people we have] play the Soviet part.

President Kennedy: Well, I'm not as generous as you about the Russians. [All laugh.]

Schroeder: [laughing] Nein, also, ich möchte nicht falsch verstanden werden. Nur um ganz sicher zu gewinnen, sollten wir möglichst, die klügsten für die [unclear] auf die andere Seite setzt. Ich würde die Russen sonst auch nicht zu [unclear].

Translator: Now, don't misunderstand me, Mr. President, it's just to be quite sure that we don't miss any point, but that is why we should have the most intelligent play the Soviet part. But I certainly wouldn't think that the Soviets are more intelligent as well.

President Kennedy: Yeah, they've got a great geography as their asset.

I read this morning Mr. [West German defense minister Franz Josef] Strauss's interview in the *New York Times* which made two points.

One is the completeness of the comradeship between the French and the Germans in military matters. And the other is the question of at what point . . . his opposition to the use of German forces, if this matter came to a crunch, until [unclear] secondary stage [of a Berlin crisis]. If this matter comes to a military [unclear], it seems to me that the law is going to rest with the side which has the larger force and that therefore there isn't much use once the military action begins in questioning whether the use of German troops would throw a shadow on our judicial—juridical rights to be in West Berlin.

Schroeder: I'm not sure whether you said "completeness" of Franco-German understanding or "not completeness."

President Kennedy: "Completeness of comradeship," I think, is the phrase Mr. Strauss used.

Schroeder: Did he really say completeness of comradeship? That's—
[Resumes speaking German.]

Ich will mal die deutsch-französischen Sachen herauslassen. Ich denke, über die französischen Möglichkeiten in dieser Sache, so realistisch, wie ich annehme daß Sie, Herr President, darüber denken.

Aber der andere Punkt ist wichtiger, denn [unclear] die Frage, wie stark ist das deutsche Engagement in dieser Sache. Und daran darf es überhaupt keiner Zweifel geben, das das deutsche Engagement in dieser Sache genau so stark ist, wie das amerikanische, aus, in welchen Sachen, aus Gefühlsgründen und aus patriotischen Gründen daraus, eher betonter als das amerikanische, es überhaupt sein kann. Das dürfte eigentlich zwischen uns keine Frage sein. Und das was ich—dieses Interview habe ich nur flüchtig gelesen, es ist mit der *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* gewesen—das was dort drinnen gesagt ist, wenn man es objektiv ließt, ist genau der Stand der Planung zwischen Live Oak und NATO. Es gibt hier eine Live Oak Planung, die dann übergeht in einer NATO Sache, und da unsere ganzen Truppen der NATO unterstellt sind, gehören wir in dem NATO-Abschnitt dieser Sache. Das [unclear] die [unclear] auf dem Papier und nach der derzeitigen Planung. Aber ich habe überhaupt keinen Zweifel daran, daß wenn es jetzt zur größeren militärischen Auseinandersetzung kommt, wir einfach deswegen von vornherein drinnen sind, weil wir halt vorne stehen. Das ist auch eine große Selbstverständlichkeit, in meiner Meinung.

Translator: I may leave perhaps the German-French thing aside—just one sentence on that. I have about as realistic a view of these things as you, I suppose, Mr. President.

But the second point, I think, is more important, and that is to what degree is Germany committed in this matter, and there can be no doubt

about the fact that our commitment is exactly the same as that of the United States, and perhaps even a little more so, out of feeling and out of patriotism, than it ever could be for the United States, so there should really be no question whatsoever between us. Now I haven't read this interview, which was given to the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* by Herr Strauss. I haven't read it in every detail; I just had a short look at it. But when you look at what it says, really, it means that it is—it corresponds exactly to what the stage of planning is between Live Oak and the NATO planning.¹² And as all *our* forces are assigned to NATO, we are automatically a part of the NATO plan in that context. But that is, of course, the situation on paper. I have no doubt that the real situation, if there were any major military confrontation or conflict, would be that we are in it right from the very first moment, simply because we are right up in front, so this is a matter of course.

President Kennedy: And the . . . this doesn't really have so much to do with what we're talking about, but the other day in talking to the French foreign minister about the disposition of French forces, of actually France maintaining its forces in France rather than in eastern Western Germany and forward strategy, because this indicates a rather sharp division between us all on this question of exactly what our military strategy is, and where our forces ought to be, where the division between those forces and the use of nuclear weapons ought to be.¹³

These are matters which seem to be somewhat unresolved, and West Germany has an important role to play in helping resolve them. We've been unable to persuade the French to move [*unclear*] their forces into West Germany and up into the forward line. And if we don't have the French forces up there then really, we've got inadequate forces.

Schroeder: Wir haben an sich vorgesehen—ich weiß nicht ob es schon geschehen ist—de Gaulle diesen Punkt noch mal sehr klar zu machen, daß wir das in der Zeit den Zustand als ganz unbefriedigend ansehen. Wenn ich richtig unterrichtet bin, sozusagen von französischer Seite [*unclear*] sind, seien die Unterhaltungen, die sie damals gehabt haben, von der französischen Seite der Standpunkt entwickelt worden, ihre Schwierigkeiten legen im Augenblick darin, daß sie dabei sein, ihre Truppen von Algerien nach Frankreich zurückzunehmen und sie mehr

12. Live Oak was the planning group for NATO, created by General Lauris Norstad to deal with military contingencies surrounding Berlin. Its headquarters were outside of Paris. It was headed by a British general assisted by U.S. and French officers, and a German observer.

13. The French foreign minister was Maurice Couve de Murville.

aus Gründen des Innerenaufbaus, und der Disziplin, und so weiter, lieber auf französischen Boden zu haben. Angeblich ist dieses Argument vorgebracht worden. Ich halte das Argument nicht für so sehr überzeugend, denn die Franzosen würden, nach meiner Meinung, in der Lage sein, unter Umständen mit amerikanischer Unterstützung, so weit es nicht um die Ausstattung der Truppen und Divisionen handelt, diese Division weiter vorne zu postieren.

Ein Bißchen liegt, nach meiner Überzeugung, in der französischen Strategie, die Auffassung, das es eine Art von—daß es zwei Schlachten daß es im Grunde zwei Schlachten gebe: eine Schlacht um Deutschland, die verloren wird, und eine Schlacht um Frankreich, die gewonnen wird. Die letzten französischen Manöver haben in der Tat einen Stand gehabt, in dem—in der Zusammenfassung, am Schluß, oder in dem Ausgangslage, glaube ich sogar, [*unclear*] Franzosen ist gesagt würde, “Die Schlacht in Deutschland ist verloren gegangen, und nun stellt sich hier für uns die soundso Situation.” Ich bin kein Stratege und kein Berufssoldat, aber ich finde, daß diese Annahmen, die die Franzosen ihren Übung zugrunde legen, nicht ganz im unseren Jahrhundert gehören. Aber vielleicht täusche ich mich, und vielleicht sind die große militärischer Genies die Franzosen. Ich möchte darüber keine [*unclear*].

Translator: Now we have the intention—I don’t know if this has already been done—but we intend to make it very clear to de Gaulle that we feel that the present situation is very unsatisfactory. If I am well informed, in that discussion with you, you were referring to just now, the French have said that that sort of difficulty now about these French forces was that they were moving them back from Algeria to France and for reasons of discipline and morale and so on it was better to have them on French soil. Now, I don’t really think that this is an extremely convincing argument, because in my opinion the French would be quite able, with some American aid, to equip their forces in such a way that they can be sent to the forward line.

In my conviction, the French strategy really is based on the rather well-known French opinion that there are actually [going to be] two battles, one [a] battle of Germany, which will be lost, and one [a] battle of France, which will be won. In fact, the last French maneuvers had that assumption—that the battle of Germany was lost—as their point of departure, and from there they proceeded in their maneuvers. Now, I am not a strategist nor a professional soldier, but I would think that these assumptions, and working assumptions, do not fully belong to our century [*laughter*]. I may be wrong; the French may be more ingenious in

the field of military strategy. I don't want to voice any, or to attribute any value to these things. I'm just voicing my opinion.

President Kennedy: I would think that when Mr. [French defense minister Pierre] Messmer and Mr. Strauss are together that this would be a matter in which, their accord being complete, that they would be able to settle. [*More laughter.*]

Schroeder: Wenn ich dazu eine Meinung äußern darf, würde ich glauben, daß es dann besser sei, sich nicht mit Monsieur Messmer zu verständigen, sondern mit General de Gaulle zu verständigen [*unclear*]. [*Laughter.*]

Translator: If I may just voice an opinion on that, I think that in that case it would be better to come to an accord not with Messmer but with General de Gaulle.

President Kennedy: Well, the Chancellor [Adenauer] may be, and General de Gaulle . . . [*unclear*] but we haven't been able to convince him.

Let me say that I have to go, unfortunately, up to Connecticut but I'm glad to get a chance to talk to you, Mr. Minister. We've been very appreciative of your efforts to maintain and coordinate our joint policy in the last months. I'm sure that you and Mr. Rusk can come to a host of understandings while you're here.

I'll certainly consider very carefully what you said about the matter of the visas. I think we ought to reach a conclusion on the issue that we talked about. If we decide to take the line that you suggested, that's one thing. If we decide together that we ought to go the other way, then we ought to prepare for that. I think this is really a symbolic concession, because I think if we increase our ground forces, and this is either/or, we come to the conclusion that here is where we stand. Or, if we don't, we ought to prepare the way for making it unimportant.

After we see Mr. Gromyko, we may have a somewhat clearer idea about Mr. Khrushchev's visit. I don't think this is very important. I don't think it's very desirable. Do you see any evidence out of it, that it would be useful if the Soviet position was to change substantially over Berlin? Is there some evidence of that? If we were going to be able to reach an accord on nuclear matters, [but] it [the test ban agreement] seems to be quite far away. So I don't think the visit's going to be useful. I have a sense it might actually make it rather dangerous, and as far as I'm concerned, I'm not going to encourage it. Mr. Khrushchev asked [*unclear*] we could talk about that at this time. If he still wants to come, then of course we could see him.

But I think we ought to try to improve the [Berlin] planning. I think

the Ambassadorial Group is going to be the repository of our hopes, and their planning should be more realistic.

In addition, I think governments ought to commit themselves somewhat more to their plans. Don't you think? I hadn't realized until just the other day that it would take almost three days to mobilize this force for the initial probe, by the time you get it on the autobahn. Well, in three days, to put a company of engineers on the autobahn is much too long a time. You ought to have that stationed right next to the autobahn. You need to do it in two to three hours, because time is so vital in this matter. So that I do think that the planning . . . Couve de Murville didn't realize this, Secretary Rusk didn't realize it, and I didn't realize it until I just happened to ask two weeks ago, because we had had similar experience a year or so ago when we put that battalion up the autobahn and it took 48 hours to reach the autobahn, which I hadn't been aware of. So that I think that we're . . .

I don't think our planning is as good as it ought to be, and I don't think the governments involved—the German, the French, the British and the American—all of us have given as many commitments as I think we ought to *give*. We don't *really* know what the British are ready to do, and the French are ready to do. They may say they don't know what we're ready to do, but we're ready to say what we would do under these various contingencies in some detail. So I think that your visit is very useful, and I hope before the end of the month we can get a greater degree of finality in understanding, as I say, between the British and the French and ourselves and you.

Schroeder: Zunächst möchte ich noch mal herzlich danken für diese Unterhaltung und für das, was Sie gerade zuletzt [*unclear*] gesagt haben, und ich hoffe, daß wenn wir das nächste Mal, bei Gesundheit, uns wieder sehen, ich denke am 7. November, daß wir dann schon ein gutes Stück weiter sind in der Überholung der Pläne, und daß wir dann die Unterhaltung fortsetzen können.

Translator: Mr. President, let me just thank you very much indeed for this conversation, this opportunity which you've offered me. And I do hope that by the next time we meet, which will be, if everything goes well [for Chancellor Adenauer's visit], by the 7th of November, we will already have achieved much progress in the planning, and we will then be able to continue to talk about it.

The meeting then concluded. President Kennedy returned to his schedule, attending the National Day of Prayer at St. Matthew's Cathedral and then going to a lunch at the Libyan embassy for the visiting Crown

Prince. He was back at the White House for only about 20 minutes before taking off for his previously scheduled political trip to Connecticut. He would return to Washington that night.

Thursday, October 18, 1962

President Kennedy had spent most of the previous day on a scheduled campaign trip to Connecticut. After his return the previous evening, he was still concealing the crisis from the press and public by keeping to his regular schedule as much as he could. That schedule began on October 18 at 9:30 A.M. with an awards ceremony, followed by a Cabinet meeting to discuss the budget, a meeting Kennedy chose to record.

10:00–10:38 A.M.

We are, therefore, going to have to review . . . what is in the administration's program. . . . And we may very well end up by cutting back on some of the things that the administration has stood for. . . . [E]ven when we have done this . . . [t]he problem that the President spoke of, in presenting an expenditure increase, and a deficit, and a tax reduction proposal—all at once—will remain.

Cabinet Meeting on the Federal Budget for Fiscal Year 1964¹

Compared to the unfolding missile crisis, the Cabinet meeting may seem mundane. Kennedy is planning a tax cut to stimulate the economy. He expects opposition from conservative committee chairmen in Congress. So in this meeting he focuses on both current spending levels and trends and on his budget planning for fiscal year 1964. Anxious to propose new

1. Including President Kennedy, David Bell, Anthony Celebrezze, J. Edward Day, C. Douglas Dillon, Najeeb Halaby, Walter Heller, Luther Hodges, Theodore Sorensen, Aubrey Wagner, James Webb, and Jerome Wiesner. Tape 30, John F. Kennedy Library, President's Office Files, Presidential Recordings Collection.