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Wednesday, August 30, ----I had an appointment at 5 p.m. with President Kennedy via the East Wing of the White House which means that there is to be no publicity. I arrived a little early and was met by a young man from Massachusetts who said the President would be a bit late. I was taken up in the elevator to a sort of sitting room in the residence part of the White House - books and magazines spread out on tables and a small bar in one corner featuring Beefeaters Gin. I sat there for a few minutes and was glad to get a chance to compose my thoughts, but the young man came back and took me upstairs to the "Yalta Room". This overlooks the south grounds of the White House, a beautiful fountain, some of those Easter ducklings that someone gave to Caroline Kennedy, and immediately outside the room is Harry Truman's famous balcony or "back porch."

Actually, I can see why Harry wanted the back porch. It's a very hice place to sit and it looks out over a beautiful vista of the Washington Monument looking toward the Potomac. Harry didn't take quite as many weekends away from Washington as either Eisenhower or Kennedy, so he liked to have his friends around on the back porch. The White House, as far as I could see, was completely empty. Jackie was up at Hyannis Port with the children and the President was apparently not expecting anyone to dinner. I waited for him for approximately one hour, and when he finally turned up, he explained that an intercept message had just come in saying that the Russians were about to resume nuclear testing. This was a Tass report to one of its offices in Central Asia, telling it to hold up a statement sent earlier for subsequent release that the Soviet was to resume testing.

Kennedy was quite upset. He said he didn't know whether the report was true or not, but they had to be ready for it. While we were talking he got a telephone call and directed the person on the other line to prepare a statement for him to issue in case the announcement was bona fide.

I had prepared to give the President a consecutive report on my visit with Khrushchev, but the sequence was more or less knocked out by his own perturbation. But I gave him a brief report, during which I said that they had talked to me about having Bobby Kennedy come over and also Joseph P. Kennedy. I said that I had advised them not to invite Joseph P. Kennedy, but that Bobby Kennedy might be a good idea.

"We don't want to send Joseph P. Kennedy," interrupted the President, "he's a pacifist. He'd give everything away."

CIA HAS NO OBJECTION TO DECLASSIFICATION AND/OR RELEASE OF THIS DOCUMENT DATE: MAR 2008 "I was delighted to meet Khrushchev at Vienna,"
Kennedy told me, "but when he handed me that aid memoir
and began talking tough, well I......He certainly can
be tough;" And Kennedy talked as if Khrushchev had given
him a really bad time.

"We'll give him Laos. He's got British Guinga. He's more or less got Cuba. But we'll not give him Berlin," Kennedy said. "How can we guarantee that he won't strangle Berlin? He wants to put Soviet troops in there. How do we know he won't continue harrassing tactics later?"

Kennedy mentioned the January 6 speech of Khrushchev 7 in which he was even tougher than previously.

I told the President that I was seeing him partly at the request of Khrushchev, though I would have wanted to report to him anyway. I asked him whether he had any message he wanted me to send back to Khrushchev because obviously, Khrushchev would be expetting one.

"Have you written Khrushchev to thank him for his hespitality?", Kennedy asked. When I replied in the negative he suggested "Why not write that if we can get Laos straightened out, then we can go on to other things?"

Kennedy added to me: "The rainy season is going to be over in a couple of weeks, and if we don't get that straightened out all hell will break loose there pretty soon."

Kennedy talked in a very discouraging mood about Berlin. "The closing down of the Berlin border wasn't so bad," he told me. "They had the right to do that. And they had to stop that hemorrhage. I was supprised they didn't close it down before. The West Germans, of course, made the mistake of playing it up too much, which was very embarrassing to us. But when he (Khrushchev) comes along later with this note on air access for West Germans to West Berlin, well - well, that's something else. That's something we can't take."

Kennedy said that Khrushchev was talking about President Ayub and his failure to hold elections in Pakistan. "After he had gone on about this for some time, I said 'You mean to say that Poland holds elections?'. He replied'What do you mean attacking a fine country that is friendly to you?'"

Kennedy summarized his views on Berlin and it seemed to me they were more than reasonable. He said "I'd give on Berlin; we have several points that we could give. There's the Oder Niesse Line which should be fixed definitely. I would also recognize East Germany. It's a fact, and we might as well recognize it as a fact. Rias is not too important and I'd be willing to give on that. But we can't sacrifice Berlin. If we do the entire structure of NATO comes down, and that's the only real alliance we have. We can't afford to weaken it. "

I pointed out that Khrushchev was willing to guarantee the Berlin and even put his own troops in Berlin with allied troops as a guarantee. Kennedy didn't like that idea. He said something about Russian troops causing friction and trouble.

I also pointed out that he was willing to guarantee the access between West Berlin and West Germany, and volunteered the statement to me that West Germany was entitled to all diplomatic relations and contacts with West Berlin.

I pointed out that what it really came down to was a matter of trust and I told him how I had talked to Khrushchev at some length about this point and about him, Kennedy. I said: "I told him about you having a 'Dobro Tzertzi' (good heart) and about your sense of humor. I told him how you had introduced me at the Big Brothers Dinner; and your crack about the Pope backing and your crack about your nephew Robert F. Kennedy wanting a job." The President smiled at this.

I also told him what I had told Khrushchev about the importance of emphasizing some of the constructive things which had taken place between the two countries, such as the Pribilof Seals Convention, the Antarctic Treaty, and the cooperation to prevent opium smuggling. I suggested a 30-day cooling off period, but didn't press it hard because I could see that he was not in the mood and that he was terribly upset by the announcement of the resumption of nuclear testing. I suggested that Averell Harriman go to Moscow as a special envoy and that I felt it was a mistake to have Tommy Thompson away from Moscow at this time on vacation.

Kennedy agreed. He said, however, that Averell had to go back to Geneva to handle Laos, and that Tommy was on his way to Moscow immediately with instructions to sound them out regarding the question of talks to begin at New York at the U. N. either with Gromyko or Khrushchev.

This apparently was what teed Khrushchev off in his lecture to Kennedy at Vienna.

I could see that the President was rather restless and I moved to terminate the conversation which already had lasted about fifty minutes. He served me some tea and toast and drank some tea himself. As we went out in the hall, he said: "Hope to God they don't start testing again. I have two children and I know what atomic war means. The Lord knows the last thing I want is for history to record that Kennedy and Khrushchev started atomic war."

In the hall as we went to the elevator was the late afternoon edition of the Washington Daily News which headlined "House Defeats School Bill."

"Damn," exclaimed the President. "They won't pass a school bill first because of religion, and now they won't pass it at all."

"Why don't you veto the impacted areas school bill?" I suggested. "Colmer of Mississippi gets aid for his district, bet he votes against general aid to education."

"They'd just pass it over my veto," the President replied. "But", he said, at least we got a roll call vote."

I was not smart enough to think of it then, but afterward, it occurred to me that he could pocket veto the school bill and then they couldn't pass it over his head.

I went downstairs in the elevator, picked up a taxi and drove home. Georgie Arnold was waiting for me. I was one hour late. We drove immediately to the country. I could not explain to Georgie why I was late and how worried the President was over the news from Russia that nuclear tests would be resumed again. I did try to tell him a little about the White House and the President of the United States. But I'm not sure that I made sense.

Georgie spent the night at the farm, sleeping in Luvie's bed. I had the feeling as we went to bed that the world was passing into a very difficult and tragic period, during which little boys like Georgie would suffer terribly because of the mistakes of their elders.