

(C. ...)

He added that he would have

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liked to have had Eugene Black as his Secretary of the Treasury, but discovered he was unavailable. Douglas Dillon, whom he hadn't known very well at the time, had been first suggested to him by Philip Graham, publisher of the Washington Post and Joseph Alsop, the columnist. The President said he was very happy with Dillon, that they had had no disagreements on fiscal policy and he didn't expect them to have any.

The President asked whether I thought he should ignore the attacks on his record by Republican National Chairman Miller or leave them to be handled by Democratic National Chairman Bailey. I said I thought he should let these fight the "battle of the mimeograph", a phrase which he must have liked because he repeated it at his news conference a couple of hours afterwards. (end insert)

Extract from item 343, Krook interview w JAK, 10/11/61
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I remarked to ~~him~~ that his three important victories in Congress had been made possible by Republican defections from their party leadership.

He agreed with an air of great amusement and said he had anticipated that situation because of the nature and purpose of the bills involved and the issue in the fight to transfer the powers of the House Rules Committee.

The President remarked on the opposition of Democratic "liberals" and a number of scientists to his choice of John A. McCone as director of the Central Intelligence Agency, but he said he wasn't paying much attention to "those groups." I confirmed his impression that I thought McCone was a first-rate appointment that would prove itself in action.

The President said he had first offered the job to Arthur H. Dean, but that he was well satisfied with McCone.

...He supposed he had better keep a "million miles away" from the House Speaker selection that would be required by Speaker Rayburn's illness. ⁰⁰⁰ But what bothered him about John McCormack as Speaker was not so much the reasons mentioned in the speculative articles, but McCormack's defects as a leader: also, "you can't believe anything he tells you as to what he intends to do." He argued with me about my views that he had unnecessarily involved his prestige in House matters, such as the Rules Committee fight, and had used extreme personal pressures when he shouldn't have and refrained from doing so when he should have. But the President did not dispute my estimate that some of his reverses in the House were attributable to resentment he had unnecessarily incurred in the House Rules fight, ^[over packing the Committee to depure] Representative Albert ² of Oklahoma, the President said, would be his choice for majority leader. ^[this soon followed] in the House, but what he needs is someone who can swing Southern votes to the Administration from opposition to it. Perhaps that should be a Southerner--² Rains of Alabama or ^r Eggs of Louisiana, he wasn't sure which--; and it was interesting that he did not mention ^[Richard] Bolling of Missouri who has gone along with the Administration's "liberal" programs and is widely supposed to be his preference.... The New York Times editorials on his leadership in Congress he finds "wholly unrealistic". Can't they see the limitations of any President, and his in particular, in trying to force Congress to go along with him in controversial matters?

Capo Administration majority?

The President's close reading of the newspapers was again indicated when he seized on a sentence in Reston's piece of that day to the effect that men of Rayburn's generation didn't have their speeches ghost-written for them. The President said that the charge made ~~by~~ ^[James] ~~by~~ ^[Speaker] ~~by~~ that he hadn't written "Profiles in Courage" was hard to shake off, but didn't I remember seeing him writing the book at Palm Beach? I replied that I certainly had, that I recalled seeing him lying flat on his back on a board with a yellow pad on which he was writing the book, and that I read enough of those pages at the time to know that the product was his own.

(But) Another subject was the difficulties he sees in the news-conference system--the long questions, the questions with a "policy purpose", etc. "I have the habit," he said, "of turning to the right, and then every time I am confronted by those women, ^[winning two] ~~Mae Craig and Sarah McInerney.~~"

(But I noticed at his news conference later that he almost succeeded in entirely overlooking these female characters who were on their feet often.)

L. L. ~~Journal~~ Oct 11.

The President came in about 1:20; the butler brought in a very good lunch on two tables, and the President started off with a Bloody Mary. Among the subjects he discussed and what he said were the following:

~~Re-~~ The status quo, which so many of his critics expound, is no policy at all. The situation there is as undesirable for the United States and the West as it is for the Russians in a good many particulars. It is Mr. Kennedy's "inheritance", "a dangerous mess", and his critics, especially the Republicans, should come up with concrete suggestions to clear up the mess instead of yelling "appeasement" whenever he tries to find out if any compromise is possible--using "compromise" in the dictionary sense of a "settlement reached by mutual concessions."

The President spoke impatiently of the obstacles to this effort constantly being set up by the West German and French governments, and he mentioned with specific exasperation some sour comments made in Washington by West German Ambassador Grewe on the reports of the President's talks with Gromyko. "And we are still paying," he said, "for the war-time slights Roosevelt imposed on General de Gaulle." He said that Adenauer, de Gaulle and Chiang Kai-shek seemed to want to

operate as makers of United States policy and not as allies.

noted) The President expressed a good opinion of the reporting of Max Frankel and Tom Wicker of our staff. I told him I thought he was very wise in having responded to Frankel's request for some details on his conversations with Gromyko and urged him to get the habit. He said he rather thought he would.

noted) The President discussed the various modi vivendi of working out an easement of the Berlin situation that have been publicly discussed, particularly complimenting Senator Pell of Rhode Island on his speech in that quarter. He also urged me to continue to publicize that and similar speeches, and recalled I had performed that service originally for Senator Pell. The President said he made a mistake in sending David Bruce to London where our easy relations with the British required no use of Bruce's great talents. "I should have sent him back to Bonn," said the President. "The career man there is all right, but it is a job for a diplomat like Bruce who is experienced in politics and executive government as well."

last) ~~VIA AIRMAIL~~ The President had just come from a meeting on the problem in that country. He said the Pentagon generally approved a recommendation by the Chiefs of Staff to send 40,000 troops there. The President said he was not favorable to the suggestion at this time and therefore was sending General Maxwell Taylor to investigate and report what should be done. It was a hell of a note, he said, that he had to try to handle the Berlin situation with the Communists encouraging foreign aggressors all over the place. The

President said he was thinking of writing Khrushchev, urging him to call off these aggressors in Viet-Nam, Laos, etc., and asking Khrushchev how he thought he could negotiate with Kennedy if their positions were reversed. The President still believes, he said, in what he told the Senate several years ago--that United States troops should not be involved on the Asian mainland, especially in a country with the difficult terrain of Laos and inhabited by people who don't care how the East-West dispute as to freedom and self-determination was resolved. Moreover, said the President, the United States can't interfere in civil disturbances created by guerrillas, and it was hard to prove that this wasn't largely the situation in Viet-Nam.

(inter) I asked him what he thought of the "falling domino" theory-- that is, if Laos and Viet-Nam go Communist, the rest of South East Asia will fall to them in orderly succession. The President expressed doubts that this theory has much point any more because, he remarked, the Chinese Communists are bound to get nuclear weapons in time, and from that moment on they will dominate South East Asia. *(end of doc)*