

STENOGRAPHIC NOTES OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN DCI, COLONEL GROGAN,  
AND PAUL PALMER ON 15 JANUARY 1958 AT 1600 HOURS.

- P- "... was going good but, obviously, it can't be described of how it is or why it is but I know that--."
- G- "No, you can't tell how or why but you can point to a couple of things, Mr. Dulles, particularly off-the-record from that ... Take the Sputnik, for example--that's public through the President's Committee. We never put these things out but the President's Committee did put out a statement there of Scoville's--Mr. Dulles let Pete Scoville go over and talk to them October the 4th."
- D- "Was that the day after or the day of?"
- G- "The day of, that morning."
- D- ".... beforehand, of course."
- G- "He said it's about to happen."
- P- "Yes."
- G- "It showed how good, remarkably good, intelligence was."
- D- "I think one could say that it was not fair to estimate that we have been over-all taken by surprise by the developments in the Soviet Union. Certain things they have done a bit sooner; certain things they're still a little further behind than we expected, but the general

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emphasis of the Soviet effort and the general time periods in which they would achieve certain results have not surprised us. Now, when I say general time period, I mean they might have been ahead a year or eighteen months in some of these major fields, but that is not very long in the life of a nation."

P- "No, certainly. Well, maybe some answer could be phrased to that. I think it's of great public interest certainly. Our experience always has been when we approach the subject of intelligence, that if we get anything good, it can't be printed."

D- "Yes. I've run into that, too. I've run this shop but I just have to stick to it."

P- "Sure."

D- "If every time we learned a development about the Soviet Union and told about it, that would be pretty disastrous."

P- "Yes, certainly."

D- "We're pretty much an open book as far as the United States is concerned. They've made every effort to keep themselves absolutely closed and, therefore, it takes very special techniques and very special efforts and we don't want them to know where we're successful."

P- "No, certainly not."

- D- "Because there are ways by which they can prevent ... successes or make those successes more difficult."
- P- "Certainly, yes. Well, then, the first question is this: 'Is it not a fact that recent, much heralded, Soviet achievements, which some people may say will make the U.S. a second-rate power in two year's time, have been primarily propaganda successes? Realistically evaluated, do not U.S. H-bombers, intermediate-range missiles, atomic submarines, and other weapons now operational equal or surpass a military effectiveness whatever the Russians say they have?'"
- D- "I have felt right along that our present position, our present military position is stronger than that of the Russians and that, if it came to a showdown which everybody hopes and expects it will not, we could reap more damage on them than they could on us, and that unless they achieved a major potential in such a ... weapon as the ICBM well ahead of us or well ahead of our having that ability with IRBMs and having the IRBMs in place, we would be able to maintain that superiority."
- P- "That's fine. There's another part to this: 'Do you believe the Russians really have an operational ICBM now?'"

- D- "We believe they have test prototypes--."
- P- "Test prototypes."
- D- "We do not, cannot, discuss the qualifications of those prototypes and that they have tested those prototypes."
- P- "But that they probably don't have an operational--."
- D- "Capability, at the present time."
- P- "At the present time. Well, this question, perhaps, is more for the Navy: 'It is said that the Soviet Union has two or three times as many submarines as we have, but how do the actual wartime capacities of these two undersea forces compare?'"
- D- "Well, I don't deal in comparative figures myself because I'm not an expert on our own capabilities, but we do credit the Soviet with having in a range of five hundred submarines of which about a half are modern submarines. We have no information that they have yet operational atomic submarines."
- P- "If they had one, we would probably know about it. Wouldn't they show it off? Isn't that the sort of thing--?"
- D- "We believe they'd show it off."
- P- "Yes."
- D- "Although, <sup>it</sup> ~~you~~ must <sup>be</sup> remember that when they come second in time in things, they don't advertise it."

P- "No, that's right."

D- "The same way as when they are first in time."

P- "Yes, just as we won't be too proud of our Sputnik. Are the Russians really ahead of us in these three things--scientific accomplishment, technical knowhow, and production capacity?"

D- "Well, I don't generally indulge in comparisons but I would be inclined to answer those three no. Would you read the three once again?"

P- "Scientific accomplishment, technical knowhow, and production capacity."

D- "I'd answer those three no, they are not ahead of us."

P- "The reason for that question is that we find so many people who are getting a sort of hopeless attitude--well, they're way ahead of us and what's the use and how can we catch up with them."

D- "We do feel that at the rate at which they are training scientists, that there may be a time in the future and not too far off where they might have a greater scientific capability as far as manpower is concerned than we."

P- "Yes."

D- "Now, in science, it is sometimes more important to have a half a dozen geniuses than to have a thousand mediocrities."

P- "Yes."

D- "Now, I don't say that the Russians are mediocrities, but numbers are sometimes misleading. It's the genius who helps you make the breakthrough and if we're on our toes, we ought to be able to produce in the free world. I think you've got to consider not only American science, but the science of the free world. If we're on our toes, there is no reason why we should come out second-best in the over-all scientific field, but I do think we've got to beef up our secondary education so as to make sure that more of the potential geniuses in science get opportunity for the training which may produce the stars of the future firmament of scientists."

P- "They're really scraping the barrel; they go after every boy that's got any ability, don't they?"

D- "Oh, yes. They take them in the schools if they've got-- if they're good in their mathematics and good in things that lead to science, they take them right along and say, 'You're going to be a scientist,' and then they carry them right on through."

P- "Yes, yes."

D- "There is no saying 'no,' but they don't want to say no because it's a great honor."

- P- "Sure."
- D- "They have given their scientists probably a position of greater honor in the community than we have, relatively."
- P- "Yes. The next question is: 'What is the military significance of the space satellites?' I suppose the answer to this part is restricted: 'How useful are photographs or TV images of the U.S. or the Soviet Union taken at five hundred miles altitude?'"
- D- "Well, let me take the first question. The first question I think I can answer; the second question is a little bit beyond my--I can and I think probably the answer would be that no one knows absolutely at this time what the answer to the last one is. We can have some ideas but I don't think we'll have accurate knowledge. Give me the first question once again."
- P- "What is the military significance of the space satellites?"
- D- "Well, the military significance of the space satellite lies in the fact that it shows what they have--it shows they have the propulsion to put a mass into the outer space and that that same propulsion directed to an ICBM-type of missile would send it a very long ways. It does not give us much clue as to guidance or accuracy."

P- "And the other part of the question is: 'When man satellites are sent aloft, can they be used for H-bomb attacks and will there be any defense against such attacks?'"

D- "That I can't answer."

P- "The next question is: 'What precautions are being taken to make sure that atomic war does not start accidentally?' There are two parts to this: 'Jet-bombers armed with H-bombs are now in the air day and night; missiles with atomic warheads are being test-fired; submarines, aircraft carriers, and cruisers, all armed with atomic weapons, are maneuvering in every ocean. Isn't there a chance that, through misunderstanding of orders or the irresponsible behavior of individuals, an atomic warhead may be propelled, into the Soviet Union or the U.S., and exploded with great loss of life, thereby, setting off all-out war before the error could be explained?' And the second place: 'A considerable number of nations will eventually have the capacity to manufacture H-bombs secretly. Has any thought been given to the possibility that an irresponsible dictator might H-bomb Moscow or Washington or both from disguised airplanes; thus, setting off a war to the death between the two major powers?'"

D- "That's quite a--."

P- "There's probably too much to that question but--."

D- "Well, on the first part of it about the accidental triggering off of war, I would think the danger is not nearly as great as the public generally conceives. It takes the bombers quite a long while to get from their starting points to their destination under any circumstances, and that an error would endure for that time, it's almost inconceivable. When you get to ICBMs, the time element shifts, but I would think it unlikely that that kind of human error would take place. That, again, that is probably a question to be answered more by Defense than by Intelligence."

P- "Yes."

D- "We would have to consider the intelligence, not our own likelihood that we, by mistake, would trigger off a war, but the question is to whether Russia, by mistake, would trigger off a war. They have iron discipline with their organization and I would very much doubt that that would take place in the Soviet Union. You have, always, a dictatorship--the danger that war can be started by one man's decision, I mean, that's another thing and I think the greater danger than the one that you indicate--."

P- "I see."

D- "That's why we believe in democracy--because there is a control. The accidental triggering off of war by a subordinate, I think, is pretty unlikely."

P- "Yes, but when more countries have the capabilities of manufacturing the atomic weapons, there is going to be a more nervous situation, isn't it?"

D- "Yes. Of course, no country is ever going to have that and have it in big secrecy. I think it is inconceivable that a country would come up with any substantial atomic capability without that fact being known. You have to test and you have to go through certain procedures, and it requires a tremendous industrial effort."

P- "Yes."

D- "Now, if twenty countries all had atomic weapons, obviously the danger of an atomic war is increased. There's no question about that."

P- "Yes. Wouldn't it be to the interest of Russia and the United States to see that other nations didn't have that or are we getting into the political end of things now?"

D- "We're getting into the political end there, but I think it is in the interest that it should be as much limited as possible. Of course, Great Britian is also an atomic

power with growing atomic capabilities. If a great many dictators around the world got hold of the atomic bomb, that obviously would increase the danger."

P- "Yes. All right, the next is: 'One of the reasons why the Soviet Union has made rapid strides in military technology being that a very high percentage of its total national resources has been devoted to armament, does it follow that the United States will have to become a modern Sparta, sacrificing much of the American way of life, in order to keep up with the Russians in the years to come?'"

D- "No, I don't think that is necessary. As war becomes more and more specialized and more and more technical, you're probably going to need fewer people in the over-all war machine. Even the Soviet Union has been reducing in numbers. Furthermore, while the modern weapons are highly-- are very expensive, on the other hand, you get more of a bang for your dollar in the modern weapon than you do in the weapons of World War II or World War I, so that while there may be periods when great expenditures are required, I should think that unless one invents an entirely new family of weapons, you'd probably find a place where you are on the downward scale of expenditures rather than a

continued upward scale of expenditures. When in World War II we called for the immediate production of twenty thousand aircraft, that was a tremendous expenditure in the calling out of a tremendous number of men to man the factories and to produce the twenty thousand aircraft in a very short space of time. That kind of a situation is not likely to arise except over a very short period and then you might have a situation where if the Russians, for example, got satisfied as to the prototype of weapons that they wanted, they might be under a very great strain themselves and we, comparably, in the same situation, in getting those into production."

P- "Yes."

D- "Very largely in the good many fields of weapons, we are still in the R and D stage and so are they. In the R and D stage, it's expensive enough but it's not really as expensive as the great manufacturing stage. Then, there is a question of how many of the modern weapons you use. There is no use destroying a country twice."

P- "No, no. Well, that's quite hopeful. The next is: 'We are told that so long as the Strategic Air Command and the Navy's carrier bombers remain in an instant readiness for retaliation, a Soviet attack on the United States is

highly unlikely because the Russians know we can annihilate their country. As of today, can SAC and the Navy destroy the Soviet Union and can the Russians destroy SAC and the Naval air arm in any way, thus, eliminating retaliation?"

D- "Well, that is mostly a question to be answered by Defense but we have always estimated--over the last few years, we have estimated that the Soviet was so worried by our deterrent force that it would not wish to risk all-out war or take an action which they thought might bring them into war."

P- "And so far as we know, there is no way they can take out SAC and the Naval air arms so that there wouldn't be any retaliation as long as they're--."

D- "No, I assume they can <sup>inflict</sup> ~~affix~~ some damage on us but even if they inflict some damage on us, the resulting force of SAC would presumably be adequate to inflict very great damage on the Soviet Union."

P- "Well, that's seems to--it's funny how many people don't realize that. I was speaking to some very well-informed man the other day and he said, 'Well, if I knew that, I'd feel much reassured.' It seems to me that that's been printed often enough."

D- "It has been, it has been said. LeMay said it and others have said it in the recent hearings."

P- "Yes, I guess you have to keep on saying it. This, of course, is one of the most common questions in peoples' mind, it's hard to answer: 'Do you believe that all-out war with the Soviet Union is probable in the near future?'"

D- "No."

P- "That's the answer they want to hear. I suppose you might say that it's not probable but it is always possible?"

D- "Miscalculations are always possible in periphery situations. When you have a situation in the Middle East as disturbed as it is and in certain parts of Asia, one side could take a step which the other could miscalculate as being directed against its vital interests, but I think the chances of that are relatively small, though not absolute negligible."

P- "Yes. Would you consider that war is eventually inevitable?"

D- "No."

P- "Not ..."

D- "I think the mere fact that weapons are now so mutually destructive that that will be a deterrent. No country has ever gone to war in the past without having a feeling that it was going to win and to win without terrible

damage to itself. Now, there have been miscalculations. Germany miscalculated twice on that, but it may be that each time they had some reason to believe that it wouldn't happen. Now, it would take pretty near a blind man not to realize that. In World War I the Germans thought that England wasn't coming into the war and that changed the whole picture for them. If you go back to what Hitler said in his rantings just before Germany went to war, he said, 'the British and the French are little worms, they won't do anything at all.' That was his language, just about. It was easier in those days to miscalculate; now, I think, no responsible person is likely to miscalculate. The terrific damage the aggressor would bear."

P- "Yes, that's fine. In the light of the foregoing questions and answers, do you feel that Americans are at present unduly apprehensive about the Soviet threat?"

D- "I think possibly it is difficult to be unduly apprehensive about any threat that is very serious to our national security. I think that when history is written--and I've said this several times in informal talks--we will look back upon the Russian miscalculation in Korea and the timing of the Sputnik as, really, blessings in disguise. A democracy like our own with our high standard of living,

with the varied interest of the people, all the possibilities in exercising their leisure and so forth and so on, it is all too easy to forget the lurking dangers in the world. It sometimes takes dramatic things. I don't think that anything that has happened in the last six or eight months--which one can say has been a real surprise to those who have been following event. But, I think--looking back on it, it is pretty necessary that these things take place in order to get people to appraise the situation and to use the time you've got to meet the dangers. If, looking back on it, if the Russians had waited a bit, a year or so, to unloose their Sputniks and their repeated testings of ballistic missiles and had made their developments in secret, we might have found ourselves in a rather difficult position in two years. Because, I don't believe anything that the--any Administration could do is as dramatic as a pointing up of the potential of the Soviet by their own actions."

P- "That's mighty interesting. They might have been another year ahead of us, in other words."

D- "They might have been another year ahead of us if they had waited another year and that might have been hard to catch up. I think probably now they have given us time."

- P- "Yes. I think there are just two more here: 'Is there a real possibility of a lasting peace between the Soviet Union and the United States?"
- D- "You'd better ask my brother that question. I hope so."
- P- "And finally: 'What can the individual American--."
- D- "May I say there, I'd just like to add there that I think an evolution is going on in the Soviet Union. I've preached that for two years, really, that with education coming along the way it's coming along, opening the eyes of the people, increased intercourse between the two countries, I think there is a chance of an evolution in Russia that will prevent a war."
- P- "That is, certainly the relation of their scientists and ours is encouraging when they meet, isn't it?"
- D- "Yes."
- P- "Well, this is the last one: 'Finally, what can the individual American do in these trying times to help safeguard the security of this country?' That's what-- whenever we tell our readers anything, that's what they ask, 'What can I do?'"
- D- "That question is easier to answer in time of war; it's far more difficult to answer in time of peace. In time of war you can join the Armed Forces or civilian agencies

that are working and you do your particular task in that way or in industry or in other ways. It is more difficult, obviously, in time of peace. I think that if we can get a measured appreciation of where we stand and try really to help support those measures which are proposed--obviously, one can't say one should blindly following everything the Administration says, everything is going to be examined, but when that examination is taking place and when we've had our great debate, then if we can sort of rally around the conclusions and try to make them effective. That goes to management, it goes to labor, it goes to industry, and it goes to people in Government. That's about the best answer I can give you."

P- "Well, I think that's a fine answer. Well, Mr. Dulles, thank you very much. It was very kind of you to let me borrow your time."

D- "It's a great pleasure. I don't generally talk for publications, so, until I let you know, just for your background guidance."

P- "Until you say it, it's from me."

D- "Right."

P- "Also--."

- D- "I've been getting letters from--oh, my good friend up in Connecticut, used to come down here all the time for the Air Force--."
- G- "Muller? Oh, no--."
- P- "Francis Drake."
- G- "Drake, yes."
- D- "Francis Drake. You want me to write a piece and I've got his letter, I haven't answered it."
- P- "He told me the other day that he hoped you were going to."
- D- "Well, I almost did put something down on paper the other day and I may still do it."
- P- "I wish you would; we'd certainly like to have it."
- D- "You've got to be free to reject it. It was somewhat along these lines. We're not in a crises we can't meet; there's nothing new--."
- P- "Well, I thought the last answers that. People shouldn't get panic; there are great assets that America has."
- D- "Yes, we can beat it. It's good to see you."
- P- "Thank you very much."
- D- "It's a great publication that you have and I've got a lot of friends on it."
- P- "Thank you, Mr. Dulles."

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D- "You know that Polish gal, that American-Polish gal is quite a character."

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P- "Oh, [REDACTED]"

D- "She came down to see me; she is a great friend of my daughter's."

P- "She's a--that girl is going to be--she's a comer. She's going to be a great writer some day, you know."

D- "Yes."

P- "She really is."

D- "Ed Muller is a great friend of mine."

P- "Thank you for taking an interest in her trip."

D- "Thank you very much indeed."

G- "Paul, I'll be right out in a second."

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