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TELCON
Stevenson
Ball
12/5/62, 2:45 p.m.

GWB: I went over and didn't see the Boss; he had a series of meetings and didn't have a minute to crowd in. I had a long talk with Bundy, and as you know there is a letter that is coming up with Arthur which with the intention it be leaked out of New York this afternoon.

S: I heard he was coming; but I didn't know about any leaks.

GWB: He is bringing a letter, which is a very good letter.

S: Have you seen it?

GWB: Yes.

S: Do you think it is all right.

GWB: I think it is a very good letter. I have talked to Clayton about it and he is working it out with Salinger so that it will be given out to the press on an informal basis from New York this afternoon. I think this should go a long way to stop this nonsense. If it doesn't, then we will have to do something else, but I think ...We have canvassed all the other possibilities of the President making some statement, etc. The whole feeling was that if a letter of this sort is a solidier thing than for him to responding under pressure and doing something which called attention more than the letter word. It is a matter of judgment. I have checked it out with our own press people here, and they go both ways on it.

S: Well, I think if the letter is strong enough it will do the business. Since I talked to you this morning, I have been to the UN for lunch and it has been shattering. I had no idea the effect it had.

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GWB: I think this letter plus the editorials this morning will do the work. We are going to watch it and if it needs something more we will get it. I wanted to say to you there isn't the slightest doubt in the world as far as the President is concerned that (1) he had not talked to Bartlett, and this is said categorically. He did not know what Bartlett was going to write until it had been written and published; and (2) that he desperately wants you to stay. This is a matter of strong feeling with him. He has not the slightest doubt that you are the best man in the world for this task of yours.

S: I appreciate that. I still don't want to do anything that will in any way embarrass him. If this will take care of it, fine. One other thing I had in mind. I am speaking there tomorrow night at the Kennedy Foundation dinner. If he cared to say anything there, following the letter, it might help. The suggestion was made to me by a newspaper man.

GWB: That is good. Let's see what it looks like in the morning after this thing has broken.

S: All right, thanks a lot.

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