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John Glenn

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I missed an appointment with Glenn yesterday because I didn't get the message, so I went in early this morning to talk to MJ. Met Glenn in the office and he said he'd talk to me right then (8:30-9:00).

He was pleased with the Mary McGrory article in the AM's Washington Post. Talked to Dale Butland and Bob Andrews his armed services guy. "Boy were we lucky on the McGrory article this morning--off the record. With the chance for damage as great as it was, we came out of that one in good shape. She goes all over the country you know. She thinks I'm crazy to suggest that our missiles move along the highways. But the Europeans do it regularly. So do the Soviets. But here everyone throws up his hands because of the 'social interface' problem. We change our MX program because Utah and Nevada won't have it. It's the best program, which is why the Pentagon has suggested it. But we all say society won't accept it. I explained all this to Mary McGrory at Hugh Gallen's reception a couple of weeks ago. I talked to her (I don't know how many) again. We already have our missiles/moving on the highways. Do people think the tooth fairy takes them from the factory to the launch pad? They are moved when they are replaced, checked out, and renovated. Why shouldn't we do the same thing we ask our allies, the Europeans, to do? McGrory told me she told Ted Kennedy about my idea and that he just laughed and laughed and laughed. I know her ideas--that we should have unilateral disarmament. She's way over here (points lefts) but that's not my view. She is so tight with Kennedy, I thought we'd get butchered (in the article). But I'll gladly take whatever black marks we get from the article." Great sense of relief that the worst didn't happen.

He then talked about the gift he's going to give the USS Ohio and he showed it to me. Then he showed me "Annie's little speech" with all the

hash marks where she should pause. This has been a major project of Mary Jane's recently. They are going to Groton for commissioning "It will be Annie's show. I'm just going along for the ride. It will be fun."

Re AWACS. "It was hyped way out of proportion to its importance to all sides. The sky isn't going to fall on Israel because of the sale. In truth, the Nimrod would be worse for them. That's a point that neither AIPAC nor Israel appreciate. Nor has Saudi Arabia stepped into a telephone booth and become superman because of the sale. Things over there aren't all that different."

"I was involved all the way through; but my maximum involvement came early. I had been interested in AWACS when we sent them to NATO. I had investigated the command structure and the way in which decisions were made as to who would fly the missions. (long description here) I felt that wherever our planes went, our people should go with them. I looked into the situation in great detail because of that principle; and I finally was satisfied and went along with it. But I was still worried about it. Because of that knowledge and because of my military background I was light years ahead of anyone in the Senate when the AWACS came up. You wouldn't believe it now, but the idea of joint crewing was never even raised during our negotiations with the Saudis. The Carter people told me that and Dick Allen sat right there and told me the same thing for the Reagan administration. So, from the beginning I understood what the problem was and I had strong views about it. I believed that wherever that plane went--that very sophisticated piece of technology--our people should go too. I'd say 25 or 28 Senators came to me early on to ask for my views. I sat down with each one of them for a half hour and talked to them just as we are here with more detail. At this time I think I had quite a bit of influence on a lot of people's thinking. The way it happens around here is that on any complex matter, only a very few Senators take an interest early on and the rest tend to push a back their time of

decision. Then as the time comes when they and their staffs have to focus on the issue, they do. At that point they start thinking for themselves. I wouldn't want to overestimate my influence at that stage. I didn't ask him why he didn't play the Sam Nunn role. *Because of pending thing?*

"It's got so complex that you could write a book about it. There was one group that was a rubber stamp for Israel. Do what they want and don't bother me with the facts. Then there was a second group that was more analytical but didn't need too much persuasion. Then a third group like myself with my concerns. Then a fourth group said support the president at all costs. This latter group became very important at the end. I just didn't go for their arguments. Someone asked me on Face the Nation whether I was against the President conducting foreign policy. I said I wasn't against the President conducting foreign policy, but I was for the Congress doing what the Constitution said it should do. We don't have a parliamentary system where a government can be thrown out on a vote of no confidence. We have fixed terms, and our only protection is in the balance of powers. I was just doing what the Constitution requires me to do... In conversations after the vote, that's one argument I just couldn't buy. It really bothers me. The administration played that angle like a violin. To the Republicans, they said we've just taken over we've got to support the Republican President. To the other side they played up the larger concern--support the President of the country. They played that one like a violin too. I just can't buy it."

A lot of the interview was taken up with pretty lengthy (and time consuming) technical descriptions of what the NATO AWACS command structure was, and what the capability of the aircraft was. A couple of times during his expositions I thought to myself how unpolitical he is when he gets into this and how he has a tendency to make your eyes glaze over when he does it. He

knows what he's talking about, but when he starts communicating his expertise, he induces boredom.

He told story of Bandur meeting. He had known Bandur since the F-15 sale to Saudis. Bandur is a pilot. "This is off the record but he considers himself a hot military pilot. We spend a lot of time talking about flying maneuvers. (Here Glenn puts two hands out and zooms them around in formation in front of him.) He knows that I shot down several MIGs in Korea. I don't normally talk about such things, and I don't like to put the guy down, but he loves to talk about real combat situations. So I give him examples of what I faced in combat; and that has given us a kind of rapport that other people don't have with him. When I heard that he was in town, I called Fred Dutton. Fred was lobbying for the Saudis and is an old friend of mine from the Kennedy days--both Jack and Bobby. He said that it was a coincidence that he was about to call me at Bandur's request. I guess it was a week or so before we could meet. In the meantime Howard Baker had called and asked if I could come over to his office to meet with Paul Laxalt and himself. They wanted to see if something could not be worked out along the lines that I had been talking about--some kind of joint crewing arrangements. As we talked, I told them that I was going to have a visit with Bandur the next day. In the morning, Baker called and asked if he and Laxalt could come over to the meeting. I said certainly. Later, when someone in the office said 'they're coming,' I looked out and there was Dick Allen, two Air Force Officers and a guy from the State Department.' I don't know how they found out about the meeting. Then Baker and Laxalt came and stayed for about 20 minutes. We all talked for about four hours. I was very careful never to put myself in the position of a negotiator. The Constitution forbids that. I talked, throughout, in terms of what I thought would go on the Senate floor. Finally we got an agreement on joint crewing that Allen signed off on,

the State Department signed off on, that I thought would go on the Senate floor and that Bandur said he thought would be agreeable to his government. He said he couldn't be sure, but he thought it was acceptable. As he was leaving, he said to me, under his breath 'It would be a lot easier if you were President and I were King.' And I said to him, 'I'd just as soon be king over here and let you be president over there.' Then he said in a loud voice something no one else could understand 'If this thing goes through, we'd both better check six.' Dick Allen spun around and 'check six?' (Glenn laughs) In flying, that means you'd better watch someone zeroing in on your tail. We had an agreement we thought would save the world, but it turned to worms overnight."

When he talked about AWACS as technology, he said "The plane can do two things in combination better than any piece of equipment in existence. It can not only survive, it can defense against incoming attacks. There are nine separate tracking instruments and a really good operator can cover three incoming attacks on one instrument. So nine good operators could cover 21 separate incoming attacks. No other piece of equipment can do that."