

Confidential. General Maxwell Taylor, Chairman, the Joint Chiefs of Staff,
May 5, 1964, 4:00 p.m., Room 2E873.

(WM: Submit any direct quote from the General to him for approval.)

The last time I saw the President alive was at the Black Watch service.

On November 22 the joints of staff were to meet with the chief of staff of the German armed forces—or whatever his title is—and his successor designate. At 9:30 in the morning they came to the Pentagon and we discussed military problems in Germany, in NATO, and our own military problems in this country.

We had lunch in a mess across from my office and afterward I came down as is my custom for a 15 minute nap. We were to resume at 2 p.m. I was napping when a buzzer sounded from the national command post center down the hall.

Brigadier General Tibbetts in the command post told me that there was word that the President had been shot in Dallas, Texas and was believed to be dying. Those were his words. I buzzed to see McNamara and he was working on the budget. He said it was an incredible thing and I went to the command post—the only news they had there was coming over the wire. I returned and called the joint chiefs of staff personally in here. I told the Germans our meeting would be postponed for a few minutes. I told the joint chiefs of staff what I knew and we agreed to put all commands overseas on increased alertness. However, there was no indication of international involvement in the assassination.

Secretary McNamara joined us and we agreed that that was all we could do.

I knew that the courier with the satchel was with the President and that the contents of that satchel had not been explained to Lyndon Johnson.

Excerpt from page 260