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(Theme music)

Voiceover: The following is a production of the Pritzker Military Museum and Library. Bringing citizens and citizen soldiers together through the exploration of military history, topics, and current affairs, this is *Pritzker Military Presents*.

Havers: Welcome to *Pritzker Military Presents* with a discussion by author Peter Shinkle about his book *Ike's Mystery Man: The Secret Lives of Robert Cutler*. I'm your host Rob Havers, and this program is coming to you from the Pritzker Military Museum and Library in downtown Chicago, and it is sponsored by Steerforth Press. This program and hundreds more covering a full range of military topics is available on demand at PritzkerMilitary.org. Executive order 10450 was signed by President Dwight Eisenhower, in effect banning gay people from working for the federal government. The ban led to firings, resignations, and even suicides, but some people nonetheless managed to hide their sexual orientation and work for the Eisenhower administration. One of these was Robert Cutler, a retired general who was the president's secretive right-hand man and the nation's very first national security advisor. Robert "Bobby" Cutler working alongside Ike and the Dulled brothers of the CIA and state department shaped US Cold War strategy in far more consequential ways than previously understood. A lifelong republican, Cutler also served three democratic presidents. A charming raconteur and the life of any party, he was a tight-lipped loyalist and a deeply resourceful operative who worked behind the scenes to get things done. While Cutler's contributions in the public sphere may not have received until now the consideration they deserved, the story of his private life has never before been told. In this gripping account, author Peter Shinkle reveals in fascinating detail Cutler's intimate thoughts and feelings about US efforts to confront Soviet expansion and aggression. Shinkle also delicately recounts with sensitivity the daily accounts and personal dramas of a small but representative group of patriotic gay men who were forced to hide essential aspects of who they were in order to serve a president they admired and a country they loved. Peter Shinkle worked for nineteen years as a reporter at various news organizations including most recently the *St. Louis Post Dispatch*. He covered the federal court system and also wrote investigative stories on subjects ranging from improper disposal of radioactive waste to contamination by a lead mining company. People join me in welcoming Peter Shinkle to the Pritzker Military Museum and Library.

(Applause)

Shinkle: Robert Cutler was deeply committed to serving in the US Army. He served in WWI and in WWII retiring with the rank of brigadier general. Later as national security advisor to President Dwight Eisenhower, he helped the president navigate many of the most challenging military problems Ike would face. My book *Ike's Mystery Man* has gotten some publicity for its exploration of Cutler's homosexuality. And yet much of the book is focused on his military career and service as national security advisor. So I'm deeply grateful for the invitation to be here at the Pritzker Military Museum and Library because it gives me a chance to focus on military issues in the book. This is all the more fitting because Cutler himself didn't talk about being gay. He talked about the army and national security and serving Ike. However, I will also provide a bit of the gay side of the story, particularly because that is how I first became interested in the subject. The two sides of the story are intertwined, as they are in the book and as they were in Bobby's life. Back in the summer of 2006 I was vacationing in Rhode Island, sitting on an outdoor deck with my mother and aunt, Judith Cutler Shinkle and Patricia Cutler Warner. I asked them some questions about their uncle Bobby Cutler, about whom I knew little other than

the fact that he was a general associated with President Eisenhower. They both said he was gay. I was shocked. Bobby, as friends and family called him, was a friend and advisor to President Eisenhower in the 1950s, an era in which homosexuality was widely condemned. It was viewed as criminal, a disease, a dangerous sign of subversion, and of course kept in the closet. Could it be true that a top aid to Ike was gay? Bobby was a lifelong bachelor. He died in 1974, and I never met him. After I was let in on this family secret, the first thing I did was to read his autobiography, published in 1965, which stated nothing explicitly about sexual orientation but dropped hints that nurtured my suspicion that there was an interesting story here. For one thing, it revealed Bobby's delight in cross-dressing. For another it said he had once had one failed romance with a woman in the late 1920s followed by a series of very close attachments to men. I interviewed Cutler family members and sought out those of Bobby's acquaintances who were still alive. They confirmed my mother's and aunt's account, and the story began to emerge. Born in 1895 in Boston, Bobby grew up in a republican family. He was a devotee of Teddy Roosevelt, a fierce patriot, a believer in military service to his country, and a fervent Christian. He published the first of his two novels the year after he graduated from Harvard. He served in the army in WWI and later had a successful career practicing law, which he left to serve in the war department during WWII. Because of his outstanding service in managing soldier voting during the presidential election of 1944 a highly politically charged undertaking, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal. At the end of the war he was promoted to brigadier general. So I'm going to show a few images. Here's Bobby at age two in Brookline outside of Boston. Bobby preparing for a school dramatic production. This is a file that emerged--a picture that emerged from files. I still have yet to solve the mystery of who this young man is--Bobby on the left holding the hat and the young friend of his on the right. This is Bobby at about age eighteen in June of 1914. Here's Bobby in the front row on the far left, receiving military training at the Plattsburg barracks in 1917 before he would go overseas to WWI. Here he is second from the right in the front row. After returning from the war Bobby enrolled in Harvard Law School where he was an editor of the law review and finished at the top of his class. This is Bobby and his four brothers and their father. Bobby is second from the right in the front standing next to his father George. All five Cutler brothers went to Harvard. All five were in the Porcellian Club. This is Bobby with Mayor Maurice Tobin of Boston, a democrat. As Bobby became involved in community activities--he was involved particularly with the Community Chest in Boston--he got to know many people in Boston including democrats. Mayor Tobin was a reform minded democrat, and they became good friends. Mayor Tobin ultimately appointed him corporate council for the city of Boston. Here's Boston on a Caribbean cruise with Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts. Lodge is on the far right in this photo. Bobby was a political campaigner for Senator Lodge and knew him quite well. Evidently this is an evening at which--a costume party, and the guests on the Caribbean vessel were invited to dress up however they chose. Bobby evidentially chose a lovely parasol that evening. And here you see Bobby receiving the Distinguished Service Medal from Secretary of War Stimson. Now, Bobby returned to Boston after the war and was named president of Old Colony Trust Company, then the largest trust company outside of New York. He was known for his intense work ethic. Some employees referred to his office, perhaps not lovingly, as hurricane corner. At the end of the war Bobby had gotten to know General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the brilliant American general who led the Allied forces in the D-Day invasion and on to victory over the Nazis. In 1952 Bobby worked with his good friend Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr. and others to help Ike win the republican presidential nomination. After Ike was nominated, Ike asked Bobby to join him on his campaign train, called the Eisenhower Special, to write speeches and help with

other matters. Bobby gladly accepted. He brought to his work an unusual combination of political acumen, a knowledge of military and intelligence matters, and perhaps most important a sparkling wit which could at times turn very bawdy and could break the tension that Ike felt over politics. After Ike won the election of 1952 he named Bobby his top national security aid. A few scenes from the campaign. Here we have Ike and Bobby in the rear car where Ike worked most of his days while on the campaign train. Ike, Mamie, and Bobby descending some steps at Columbia University in New York after attending a church service on a Sunday during the campaign. Ike and Bobby again working over some papers during the campaign. And this is a shot of Harvard Square shortly before the election, late October 1952. In the car on Ike's left, you have Bobby. On Ike's right Christian Herter, then US representative running for governor of Massachusetts. After the election Bobby moved to Washington and took up residence at a boarding house for bachelors that had been begun by aids to Teddy Roosevelt. From the start of the administration Bobby insisted on remaining in the background. He adamantly refused to speak to the press, on or off the record. And yet he was a man who knew many of the highest secrets and who was known to be completely comfortable with Ike and his cabinet members. This would eventually result in the Saturday Evening Post dubbing him "the mystery man of the White House". Two months after Ike's inauguration in January 1953 Bobby proposed reform of the National Security Council, which had been largely neglected by President Truman. Bobby envisioned it as the preeminent tool for the president to set national security policy. Bobby devised a new position for a person who would set the agenda for the NSC meetings and also brief the president on the issues to come before those meetings. Just one day after Bobby delivered his plan to Ike, Ike approved it. A few days later Ike named Bobby to the new post, which is now called national security advisor. Here's a scene not of the National Security Council but of a group of members of the cabinet seated around a pool in Quantico. You have from the left Budget Director Joseph Dodge, Treasury Secretary George Humphrey, standing, Defense Secretary Charles Wilson, and Attorney General Herbert Brownell, all evidently listening to Bobby telling one of his stories. But even before that reform of the NSC in February 1953 Bobby took a bold step with J. Robert Oppenheimer, the nuclear physicist who led the Manhattan Project to create the nuclear bombs dropped on Japan. By that time Oppenheimer had become controversial for taking public positions expressing concern about the global threat from the nuclear arms race. He had also come under scrutiny for association with communists. His brother Frank who had worked with Oppenheimer at Los Alamos admitted he was a communist in 1949 and testified before the House Un-American Activities Committee. Brushing aside the controversy, Bobby invited Oppenheimer to speak on February 25, 1953 with the NSC in the White House cabinet room. Oppenheimer spoke about a panel he had served on under President Truman, which called for greater openness with the American public about the nuclear arms race. Bobby said that the panel was very greatly disturbed by the public apathy and lethargy about the atomic problem, adding that this was the reason that it recommended candor in revealing to the public the enough-ness conundrum. That was the problem that the Soviets had now achieved enough nuclear power to destroy the United States even though the United States had far superior power. Eisenhower was unmoved. The president expressed his opposition at this stage to indicating to the American people anything about the size of our stockpile of weapons, and Secretary of Defense Charles Wilson joined him by stating that it seemed foolish to scare our people to death if we don't need to and can't really do anything about this problem. This led to a series of challenges to the proposed policy of candor. Treasury Secretary George Humphrey argued there was no use in blowing hot and cold with the public on the atomic situation, frightening them one day and reassuring them the next,

and expressed concern about the fiscal impact of increased expenditures. Atomic Energy Commission Chairman Gordon Dean noted that Congress had recently approved a major expansion of the nation's nuclear weapons production capacity after the AEC argued it was necessary for atomic preparedness. President Eisenhower then said, quote, "It would make us look very silly if at this stage we reversed the field and called off the expansion program which had been approved." And he pointed to an upcoming open nuclear test planned for the Nevada desert. In short, asked the president, "Isn't it a plain fact that the information which the members of the panel were so anxious to give to the American people were indeed already getting out to them?" In that moment, just as serious doubts about the report of the panel were erupting, Bobby steered the conversation back to the panel's recommendation of openness with the American people about the reality of the nuclear arms race. Quote, "Mr. Cutler broke in to say that according to his understanding, the panel was making a strong recommendation that the people of the United States be informed about what was called 'the enough-ness problem' and its significance for them. I read in the report, continued Mr. Cutler, that the people of the United States are mature and should be informed insofar as compatible with security. The president agreed with Mr. Cutler's statement as to the maturity of the American people but remained unconvinced of the desirability of the first recommendation. He then inquired us as to the next move. Mr. Cutler suggested that the council turn the panel report over to the senior NSC staff to come up with a study of ways and means of carrying out its five major recommendations. Without further questioning or debate, the NSC then referred the matter to the NSC staff to work with Vannevar Bush and report back to the council. Despite the president's deep misgivings, the Oppenheimer panel's proposed policy of candor had found a safe harbor at the NSC with Bobby's support." This meeting led directly to Ike's adoption of what would be called Operation Candor, an effort to inform the American public about the threat of the nuclear arms race. While an ad campaign begun under Operation Candor was ultimately curtailed, quite sharply I would add, the policy discussion led directly to Ike's atoms for peace speech in December of 1953, which in turn led to the creation of the International Atomic Energy Agency, the world's chief anti-nuclear proliferation body. Shortly before Ike gave his atoms for peace speech on December 8, 1953, turmoil erupted after a former congressional staff member William Borden wrote a letter to the FBI recounting evidence of Oppenheimer's association with communists and stating, "More probably than not J. Robert Oppenheimer is an agent of the Soviet Union." FBI director J. Edgar Hoover ordered a review of Borden's letter and then forwarded it to Bobby, Secretary of Defense Wilson, and other members of the administration. Wilson then called Ike and warned that Joseph McCarthy knew about Borden's letter and might use it against the administration. The FBI found factual problems with Borden's letter, including its recounting of testimony of atomic spy Klaus Fuchs. And Bobby shared questions about Borden with Ike. Yet on December 2, Ike concluded that Oppenheimer must be barred from access to all classified information until the matter is thoroughly investigated. And he ordered Bobby convey that message to attorney General Brownell and FBI director Hoover on December 3, as Ike was leaving that day to meet with Winston Churchill in Bermuda. For Bobby, who months earlier had brought Oppenheimer into the inner sanctum of the NSC and embraced his concept of Candor, which the president was about to give a speech on in the United Nations, it had to be an extraordinarily stressful time. And yet his letters and files in the Eisenhower Library reveal no stress. Instead we have this. This, ladies and gentlemen, is the healthy way to relieve stress. This photograph showing Bobby riding his bike hung outside a small door into the Oval Office. Amazingly in his autobiography this photo is shown as taken on December 3, 1953, the very day that Bobby met with Brownell and

Hoover to give them Ike's order for an investigation of Oppenheimer and to plan the steps ahead. It bears and bore at the time a caption that reads, "It's not young Wakenwohr of course but Bobby on his iron horse." It shows Bobby bicycling along the Potomac River in Washington again on December 3, 1953. Ultimately no criminal charges were ever filed against Oppenheimer, but his severance from the Atomic Energy Commission would be upheld by a three-person administrative panel and a process that afforded Oppenheimer limited rights to examine witnesses and evidence. As national security advisor, Bobby worked regularly with FBI director J. Edgar Hoover. Hoover was rumored to be gay, and yet he also was leading a vigorous campaign to drive what were then called sexual perverts out of the federal government. Senator Joseph McCarthy, also rumored to be gay, had picked up this campaign for sexual perverts and twinned it with his hunt for communists. Ike had campaigned with McCarthy and wanted to make good on his promise to drive subversives out of the US government. In early 1953 Bobby recommend that Ike adopt security rules for federal employees that had been drafted under President Truman. These rules included the criteria for sexual perversion that had the effect of launching a ban on homosexuals in the federal government. This ban would have a terrible effect, causing by one estimate as many as 10,000 gays to be fired. I called this ban peculiar because Ike himself seemed quite sympathetic to homosexuals, not inclined to persecute them. The historical record reveals no evidence that either Bobby or Ike seriously advocated a campaign against so-called sexual perverts for political advantage like McCarthy did. Yet it does appear that Ike issued his security rules, executive order 10450 primarily to fulfill his campaign promise, which he made to win the support of McCarthy and his base to rid the government of subversives. For Bobby's part his role was chiefly to steer Ike to the security rules drafted under President Truman that contained the provision regarding sexual perversion. It is also true that Bobby, Ike, and others did not object as they reviewed the proposed security rules before Ike signed them on April 27, 1953. The ultimate lesson to be drawn from this, sorry SAGA, in my view is that politicians may seize upon a vulnerable minority, drum up fears about them, and use those fears to their own political advantage. Furthermore, even those who by reason of their personal or professional experience should know better can acquiesce and stand by silently as tremendous wrongs unfold. Now, I'd like to return to a bit more military history. Let me take you back to the fall of 1952 when Bobby was working for Ike on the Eisenhower Special, as the campaign train was known. There, Bobby met a young speechwriter named Stephen Benedict, and they became good friends. After Ike's election, Steve who was secretly gay, moved into a White House staff post and recommended that Bobby hire Steve's former lover, a former navy intelligence officer named Skip Koons on the staff of the NSC. Here you see a picture of Steve as he looked as he lived with Skip in southern France in 1950 and 1951. A bit more buttoned up in the Eisenhower White House staff directory. And here is Skip Koons in his naval uniform. Skip, born in New Jersey in 1926, attended Princeton, but after two years of college went to work in the Office of Naval Intelligence to join the war effort in February 1945. He was assigned to the navy language school in Boulder, Colorado to learn Russian and then returned to the office of naval intelligence in Washington and was then assigned to the navy's 7th fleet in the pacific based in Tsingtao, China. Skip was soon in the center of a conflict with the Soviet Union at the dawn of the Cold War. In December 1946 the 7th fleet commander, Admiral Charles M. Cook, Jr. worked with General Marshall and George Kennan in the state department to develop a plan to make the point to the Soviet Union that the port of Dairen, China, which was supposed to be an open port under the terms of the Yalta Accords, must remain open. Cook ordered a small vessel, the LCI-1090 to be stripped of its arms and then make a call on the port of Dairen. At the time the port was under the

control of the Soviet army and Chinese communists. The Soviet army was at the time helping Mao's communist forces battle the nationalists for control of China. As the mission was prepared Cook assigned his Russian speaking intelligence officer Skip Coons, then all of twenty years old, to the LCI-1090. When the American vessel arrived in the port the Russians said the ship could remain in the port for only forty-eight hours. The crew began efforts with the help of an American console official living in Dairen to convince the Russians to let the vessel remain longer. And some members of the crew were late in returning to the vessel prior to the forty-eight hours deadline. A Russian officer came onboard barking an ultimatum at the commander, and Skip translated the angry encounter. The Russians said that if the Americans remained in the port past the forty-eight hour limit, quote, "We will not be responsible for the consequences," close quote. Faced with what appeared to be an ultimatum, and with Soviet forces arrayed on the pier, the American commander ordered his vessel to leave the port. A story of the intense conflict ran on the front page of the New York Times four days later, December 24, New York time. The Soviets denied any ultimatum had been issued, and the Truman administration also played down the confrontation, but navy officials backed up the press account and in particular the translation provided by the young intelligence officer. And an editorial in the Times soon criticized the Truman administration for failing to stand up to the Soviets. Seven years later in 1953 Skip was working in Paris for a CIA front called AMCOMLIB, setting up anticommunist radio broadcasts in Russian and other languages to the Soviet Union. Bobby at this time--this was the time when Stephen Benedict introduced Bobby to Skip. Bobby swiftly hired Skip to join the staff of the NSC. Together Bobby and Skip would work on some of the most sensitive national security matters in the NSC. Along the way Bobby developed passionate feelings for Skip. We know this because after my mother revealed Bobby's secret to me, I went to the Eisenhower Presidential Library in Abilene, Kansas, whose staff kindly introduced me to Stephen Benedict. I met Steve for the first time in July 2008 when Steve was eighty-one and living in upstate New York. After concluding he could trust me with a treasure he had been safe-keeping, he gave me Bobby's six volume diary, which includes Bobby's expressions of love for Skip. The diary revealed that Bobby had become extremely fond of Skip almost from the moment Bobby hired him, but Bobby's passion for Skip truly blossomed in July of 1957. I'll read you a segment of the book about that. (Pages turning) "On Saturday night, July 13, 1957, Bobby and Skip went out to see a movie, and after the show, Skip drove Bobby home in his thunderbird. Skip pulled the black convertible up in front of the family, Bobby's residence a few blocks from the White House. The stark age difference between the two men-- Bobby was sixty-two and Skip was thirty-one--did not impede the sharing of affection the moment came rushing back to Bobby as he poured out his feelings of love for Skip in a secret diary. 'He brought me home from a movie in the thunderbird and went to say goodnight outside number 1718 H-Street. I took his hand, our fingers for a moment interlaced. It was at that moment the greatest adventure of my life began. The best, the purest, the most penetrating emotion I ever knew. God, keep this spirit always so, wearing his cross, thinking of his happens, remembering every minute of his serenity and serious charm, wanting nothing of life but to have a part of his life.' By the time Bobby wrote this glowing diary entry a year later he was wearing a gold cross that Skip had given him. In an earlier diary entry Bobby wrote, 'The brilliant light of my love for him throws all the rest of this world in shadow.'" Here you see Skip behind the wheel of his black thunderbird convertible outside of the house that he shared with Steve Benedict outside of Alexandria, Virginia. Called the Dr. Dick House because its owner was Dr. Elisha Dick, who ministered to President Washington on his deathbed. This is Bobby and Skip beside the pool at the Dumbarton Oaks Mansion in Georgetown in July of 1957. Now, throughout the 1950s the United States

had poured treasure into building as many weapons as possible to create a massive strike force to deter the Soviets from launching a first nuclear strike. The US called this strategy massive retaliation. Although to the outside eye it was unclear whether this was retaliatory or a first strike capability. The primary component of this force was the air force's strategic air command, a fleet of bombers equipped to carry nuclear bombs and drop them on the Soviet Union. In early 1958 Bobby received reports suggesting that the devastation from a nuclear conflict with the Soviets would be staggering. At the same time Bobby was concerned that because the United States was devoting so much of its resources to nuclear weapons, its conventional forces had grown weaker compared to Soviet conventional forces, and this meant that European allies were increasingly doubting that Americans would come to their resource in case of limited war with the Soviets, and some--the western allies in NATO--had begun doubting that their American ally would declare war against the Soviets to defend them. As a result, Bobby feared, the Soviets could begin to nibble away at the west through non-nuclear conventional wars. To address this two-pronged problem, Bobby began contemplating ways to reduce the rapid growth in the nuclear arsenal of the United States to avoid the risk of a massive nuclear conflict and also to permit the growth of conventional forces. This would lead to an effort by Bobby in the NSC to change US nuclear strategy. Bobby summarized his concerns about nuclear weapons strategy and called for a change in that strategy in a blunt memo he expected to share with the president titled, "Massive Exchange of Nuclear Weapons," a three page memo said the nation's military strategy from the start of the nuclear age had led to a race to produce as many nuclear weapons as possible to destroy as many enemy targets as possible. Now the strategy had led to an almost inconceivable world situation due to the threat of global nuclear destruction. A recent exercise indicated that in fifteen hours of preliminary exchange between the Soviet aggressor and the US, nuclear weapons involving 7 million kilotons, over half of it in the first three hours, would be detonated, with the US going on to win with still further detonations against the enemy, Bobby explained in his memo. This exercise contemplated nuclear explosions in North America, Europe, Asia, and North Africa, occurring within a half day that quote, "were 350,000 times in magnitude as the nuclear explosion at Hiroshima, which resulted in over 130,000 casualties: 64,000 killed, 72,000 injured." Close quote, he wrote. Quote, "The effect of any such exchange is quite incalculable. No one knows what the explosion of 7 million kilotons involving nuclear material would do due to the weather, to crop cycles, to human reproduction, to the population of all areas of the world, whether or not directly exposed to the detonation. It is possible that life on the planet might be extinguished," close quote. He went on to say that the massive stockpile of nuclear weapons could assume to be reasonable for purposes of the US launching a preventive war, in essence the first strike attack designed to obliterate the Soviet military before it could launch its own nuclear attack. However, he reasoned, if the nation's deterrent were based on being able to launch a devastating attack even if the Soviets attacked first, then a much smaller US nuclear force, perhaps that aimed at only one-tenth the number of Soviet targets, would be sufficient to provide such a deterrent. Adoption of this new deterrent strategy could enable the US to have far fewer nuclear weapons. In exchange for backing off the headlong rush to nuclear weapons production, Bobby proposed a new target--population centers rather than military targets to strengthen the deterrent effect. Bobby theorized, quote, "that the enemy would be equally deterred from attacking the US if the enemy knew that we would in retaliation destroy their population centers instead of only some of their military installations." It was a cold calculation, but one that Bobby made in the context of an arms race that proposed significant risk of a massive exchange of nuclear weapons that could kill all humans on the planet whether or not they lived in population

centers. Indeed Bobby argued that the lack of US conventional forces increased the chances of war with the soviets. Bobby had raised the same concern about the nuclear weapons race that Oppenheimer and numerous other critics had raised. However, Bobby's solution--creating a deterrent by targeting cities with a much smaller number of bombs--was clearly aimed at appealing to the military men who believed that the massive retaliation deterrent was critical to preventing a Soviet attack. Ultimately on May 1, 1958 in a showdown NSC meeting in the White House cabinet room, Nathan Twining, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the chiefs of each of the military services, would make their views known on Cutler's proposal. Defense Secretary Neil McElroy said that the issue of a limited war with the soviets was of great gravity but noted that increasing conventional forces could only come at the expense of the nuclear deterrent capability for massive retaliation. General Maxwell Taylor, the army chief of staff, voiced strong support for Bobby's plan, calling for its immediate adoption as a means of enabling the United States to respond to limited aggression. The air force secretary, however, General Thomas White, urged rejection of Bobby's concept, as did General Twining, who said Bobby's proposal amounted to a failure of will to use nuclear weapons. He said, "No firepower of any kind is of any use if there is no will to use it," and he rejected any reduction in expenditures on the nuclear deterrent. Ultimately Ike also opposed averting resources away from the growth in the US nuclear arsenal. Ike also suggested he was prepared to launch a nuclear attack if the Soviets attacked in the NATO area. Ultimately Bobby's proposal went down in defeat, though Bobby was evidentially buoyed by his belief that the NSC process he had forged with Ike would arrive at the best US national security policy. In a letter to Skip two days later on May 3, 1958, Bobby called the NSC meeting, quote, "terrific," close quote. He said, "The joint chiefs erupted over my personally drafted alternative on limited aggression, while the president and foster Dulles were on opposing sides. Many thought the best meeting ever," he added. "I felt that I had made a contribution. The P," or president as he called him, "said in debate, it was the most interesting paper he looked at in six months." Three decades would pass before the US and the Soviet Union in 1987 signed the intermediate nuclear forces treaty, eliminating some of the thousands of missiles that the two sides had built. Shortly after that meeting in May 1958 Bobby took a vacation with Skip in Venice, where he began keeping his secret diary devoted to his love for Skip. Here you see a photo of Bobby likely taken by Skip on that trip. It shows Bobby in St. Mark's Square, and Bobby pasted this into the diary as a memento of that trip. Bobby resigned from his post at the NSC in July 1958, citing among other things his exhaustion from performing the role of national security advisor. Skip meanwhile had taken a position with the US information agency at the American embassy in Paris. In August 1958 Bobby traveled to Paris to be with Skip again, and the two men traveled to Normandy. They visited the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial where soldiers who died in the D-Day landings are buried in a beautiful setting along the Normandy coast. Here Bobby wrote a postcard to Ike telling of his and Skip's visit. You can see it's dated August 23. Addressed rather amusingly, "The President, The White House, Washington D.C., USA." It somehow found its way to the White House. "Dear Mr. President, Skip and I drove over in his car to see the areas of your great landing and to pay our respects. It is very impressive and interesting that the large crowd of visitors on Saturday were mostly French. Yours, Bobby." Bobby was evidently quite open with Ike about his fondness for skip, as the postcard reveals. On the other side of the postcard by the way is a slightly homoerotic statue that is at the center of the memorial. This is Donald De Lue's, The Spirit of American Youth Rising from the Waves. Of course, beauty is in the eye of the beholder, so many may not see that as homoerotic at all. I leave that up to you to judge. A short while later Skip and Steve and their friend Gaylord

Hoftiezer all fell under an investigation for homosexuality under executive order 10450, the same order that Bobby had helped Ike draft five years earlier. Steve lied bluntly to a US information agency investigator, but the investigation left the men horrified and anxious. Ultimately Skip resigned from his position at the embassy, and that ended the investigation. Bobby helped Skip obtain a job with First National Bank of Boston and made arrangements for him to live for a brief while on the third floor of the Tavern Club, a club that Bobby was a member of in Boston. Bobby also bought a sailboat for Skip, which Skip named the Seagull. Yet the two men did not sail off into the sunset. Indeed Bobby sought an ever-closer relationship with Skip, but Skip wanted a close physical relationship only with other younger men. The tension became too much for Bobby, and he sought to get away from the agony of unrequited love. Once again as he had before in his life, he turned to work. Ike appointed Bobby as the first US executive director of a new organization, the Inter-American Development Bank. Here you see Bobby being sworn in as the first executive director of the Inter-American Development Bank in February 1959. Bobby went on to serve as a director of the bank under President Kennedy until July 1962. One final image I have to share with you tonight is a photo of the man who made this book possible, Stephen Benedict. Here he is with the diary, with Bobby Cutler's diary. Steve had always maintained his friendship with Bobby and Skip, and after Skip died in 2005, Steve served as executor of his estate. Working through documents at Skip's home in New York, Steve discovered the diary shown here with the leather carrying case that Bobby had made for it. Now, I've told much of the Bobby Cutler story tonight, but I also have followed the old dictum of authors at public events. Don't give away the story; make them go buy the book. How great was Bobby Cutler's contribution to US national security, and did Bobby ever find happiness in a relationship with a man? For the answers to these questions, I refer to you to *Ike's Mystery Man*. I want to thank the Pritzker Military Museum and Library for having me here, and I'd be happy to take any questions.

(Applause)

1: So, two questions. One is, at a time when being gay would end up with a lobotomy or losing your home, what would have happened if the Russians had found out, you think? And the second is, did Bobby have something to do with—'cause you mentioned earlier that he was in contact with Dulles and Eisenhower, and you brought up McCarthy a few times. Did he have anything to do with using the gay bait against Joe McCarthy in order to turn the American public against him?

Shinkle: I think you ask a very good question regarding what would have happened if the Russians had identified Bobby as gay. That's a counterfactual question of course. We have no reason to believe that they did so. It also should be noted that while concerns of Soviet blackmail of homosexuals were provided as the reason for a view that they were particular security risks. In fact the evidence of that is really very weak, and that is why the sexual orientation test for security is no longer practiced by the United States government. There's no reason to believe they're any more at risk than say a heterosexual having an affair. So with that said, I should say that Bobby was actually the first national security advisor and the fourth because in 1955 he was trailed by rumors of homosexuality, and in 1955 he actually resigned and went back, returned to Boston, and began campaigning for Ike. And we know that in that period, '55 and '56, rumors were getting back to the FBI that Bobby was gay, and it is very possible that he resigned in order to not become a liability should those rumors be carried in the press. There were unreliable publications and rumor-mongering publications including particularly the magazine *Confidential* that printed all kinds of allegations of homosexuality against public officials. So, I think Bobby took actions to protect Ike. So, but needless to say, had his homosexuality become known, it would have been extremely explosive in that era. It

would have been a death charge for the Eisenhower administration, I think it's fair to say. Moving on to your second question about the army and McCarthy hearings, it was open season using homosexual smears all over Washington. McCarthy and Cohn were not the only victims. They were perpetrators as well. But as to the question of whether Bobby had any involvement in that, there's no evidence of that at all, and he was quite removed from the army and McCarthy hearings, although he had some modest involvement, which I describe in the book. But he was not an integral player in fashioning the strategy for the army in the hearings themselves.

2: Given the expertise that you discussed this evening that he had with the respect to impact of nuclear war and so on, the very question we just heard, was he sought out for any council at all during the Cuban Missile Crisis by Kennedy?

Shinkle: No, he was not. With regard to the Kennedy administration, I can tell you that interestingly enough the National Security Council became a campaign issue twice in this period I've been talking about tonight. One is that with Bobby's assistance Ike actually condemned Truman's use or failure to use the National Security Council. And then Jack Kennedy criticized Ike's use of the National Security Council, and Ike largely disbanded the NSC and hardly used it at all for the first three months of--excuse me, Kennedy hardly used it at all for the first three months of his administration. After the failure of the Bay of Pigs he quickly ordered regular NSC meetings, and they realized that this machine that Collier and Eisenhower had built up to really try to understand the massive amounts of data and intelligence coming in from different countries of the world and make sense of it was actually quite a good thing. But no one ever reached out to Bobby during the Cuban Missile Crisis to my knowledge.

Sturch: I have a question from online. As someone who has studied Cold War policy, do you see any parallels with today's climate in interactions with Russia?

Shinkle: There is a parallel in that, as I described tonight, Bobby was very concerned about the weakness of US conventional forces and whether there's a vulnerability in the NATO area that would lead to Russia, the Soviet Union then, nibbling into devouring western countries, eroding western freedoms. And as I look at the world scenario now I have to say that that's an issue that's very much front and center. You know, Ukraine has felt the brunt of that. I personally wonder about the safety and security of the Baltic countries. But you know, that's the parallel that I see from today's world, today's security world to this but there are lots of other parallels that we could talk about, but that's one that jumps to mind.

Sturch: Thank you very much.

(Applause)

Havers: Thank you to Peter Shinkle for a great discussion, and thank you to Steerforth for sponsoring this program of *Pritzker Military Presents*. The book is *Ike's Mystery Man* published by Steerforth. To learn more about the Pritzker Military Museum and Library, visit us in person or online at PritzkerMilitary.org. Thank you, and please join us next time on *Pritzker Military Presents*.

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(Theme music)

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(Theme music)

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