

Interviewing History: Ted Sorensen, Special Counsel to President John F. Kennedy

On June 25, 2008, Brett Edkins, *research assistant to Zbigniew Brzezinski*, Natalia Filipiak, *research associate, Europe Program*, Russ Oates, *deputy director, External Relations*, and Veronica Haskins, *development and campaign manager, Office of Development*, gathered to interview Ted Sorensen about his experiences during the Cuban Missile crisis. As *special counsel to President John F. Kennedy*, Sorensen was intimately involved in top-level decision-making during this severe national security emergency.

Throughout the night, Sorensen emphasized the importance of learning from one's mistakes, and of challenging the status quo. Without these aptitudes, he suggested that we might live in a very different world today.



“My experience interviewing Mr. Sorensen proved to me that youth and the ability to lead effectively are not mutually exclusive. Mr. Sorensen was just one of several young professionals in the Kennedy White House who showed a mature sense of judgment during the Cuban Missile Crisis, despite his relative lack of foreign policy experience. Theirs is a remarkable story of sound judgment and creativity trumping the orthodoxy of seasoned experience.”

—Veronica Haskins, *member, Team Sorensen*