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## **Russian Foreign Ministry Documents On the Cuban Missile Crisis**

### **Introduction by Raymond L. Garthoff**

Among the new archival materials on the Cuban Missile Crisis recently made available by the Russian government are the first batch of diplomatic documents, a selection of 21 documents totaling 147 pages; extensive translations of these materials (as well as of two other documents released from the former CPSU Central Committee archives) follow this introduction. While certainly welcome, this represents only about twenty percent of a file of 734 pages of Foreign Ministry (MID) documents declassified in the fall of 1991 and in early 1992. Moreover, many documents remain classified. Still, it is an important step forward.

The documents were acquired through the efforts of the author and of the National Security Archive (NSA), a non-governmental, privately-funded research institute based at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. [Ed. note: Shortly before presstime, a second group of declassified Foreign Ministry documents reached NSA; however, these consisted mostly of previously-published Kennedy-Khrushchev correspondence and other materials that were not

previously published but were of lesser import than those already obtained.]

The 21 documents initially released comprise selections from six categories of material. First are three cables from, and one message to, Soviet Ambassador Aleksandr Alekseyev in Havana sent shortly prior to or during the crisis; second are seven cables sent from Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin in Washington and one to him, also all prior to or during the crisis, and one from Soviet official Georgii Zhukov, also sent from Washington; third are one message from Ambassador Valerian Zorin, Soviet representative to the United Nations in New York, and one to him (and to Deputy Foreign Minister Vasily Kuznetsov) from Moscow; fourth are two messages from Foreign Minister Gromyko to Moscow just before the crisis broke; fifth are three messages from Havana to Moscow reporting on First Deputy Prime Minister Anastas Mikoyan's negotiations with Prime Minister Fidel Castro and other Cuban leaders as the crisis was being ended; and finally, the sixth is a single message from Deputy Foreign Minister Kuznetsov after his meeting with President Kennedy on 9 January 1963, in effect closing the post-crisis diplomatic negotiations. A few of these have been released earlier, in particular one on Mikoyan's talks with Castro. Nonetheless, they are all of interest and together they make a

substantial addition to our documentary base and some contribution to our understanding of the crisis.

These materials expand on the earlier released messages between President Kennedy and Prime Minister Khrushchev. There are, however, no materials on Foreign Ministry evaluations or other interagency deliberations in Moscow, in contrast to the extensive releases of comparable materials by the United States.

Some of the Foreign Ministry documents have been lightly sanitized, and a number of them are only excerpts, but excisions are not noted except where there is an internal blank space in a paragraph. Documents are not identified by their original designators (such as telegram numbers), nor by their Foreign Ministry archive file locations.

The precrisis reports of Ambassadors Alekseev and Dobrynin help to set the stage, but they do not add much to what has been known. Gromyko's cabled report of his meeting with President Kennedy (detailed in his memoir) is not included, but his account of the discussion of Cuba in his meeting that same evening with Secretary of State Dean Rusk, and a message giving Gromyko's evaluation of the situation on October 19, are included. Both are quite reveal-

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## FOREIGN MINISTRY DOCUMENTS

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ing. Gromyko not only had obtained no hint of the American discovery of the missiles, he reported that from all available information, including Soviet intelligence (referred to by the usual circumlocution as information received "through unofficial channels") and from other countries (which would include Cuba), "the acuteness of the anti-Cuban campaign in the United States has somewhat abated," and that under prevailing conditions "a military adventure against Cuba is almost inconceivable." Notwithstanding his own knowledge of the secret missile deployment underway, he even said, "Everything that we know about the position of the USA government on the Cuban question permits the conclusion that the situation in general is completely satisfactory." How did he think the United States would react when it found out about the missiles? And this evaluation followed his meetings with Kennedy and Rusk.

Dobrynin's cables on his meetings with Robert Kennedy on October 23, 27, and 28—or, rather, the excerpts that have been released—help to clarify these important exchanges. Among other things, they make clear that there was not merely a statement by Kennedy, but "an understanding" on withdrawing the American Jupiter missiles in Turkey, but also that it had to be kept in "strict secrecy." The material released does

not, however, include the reports on Dobrynin's delivery to Robert Kennedy on October 29 of a draft *written* agreement, and its sharp rejection in another meeting on October 30.

The reporting on Mikoyan's talks in Cuba, while not complete, does give the main discussions in considerable detail. Incidentally, apart from Mikoyan's efforts to persuade Castro to agree to the withdrawal of Soviet IL-28 bombers from Cuba and his reassurances on Soviet support on other matters, both Mikoyan and Castro discussed aspects of the crisis itself that shed light on earlier Soviet and Cuban thinking and actions. Both, for example, had clearly concluded by October 27 that an American attack on Cuba was imminent—although they drew different conclusions on what the Soviet Union should do about it. While not all statements made in that exchange were necessarily accurate, it is of interest to note that Mikoyan said, in answer to a Cuban question, "speaking frankly, we [the Soviet leaders] had not thought at all about the bases in Turkey" as a tradeoff until the Americans, specifically Walter Lippmann in a newspaper column on October 25, had raised the matter. He also did not disclose to Castro—who had found the idea of a tradeoff repugnant—the secret understanding reached with Kennedy on the withdrawal of the missiles from Turkey.

The reporting on the extensive U.S.-Soviet negotiations in New York from 29 October 1962

to 7 January 1963, by contrast, is completely omitted, apart from Kuznetsov's subsequent final meeting with the president on 9 January 1963. This negotiation settled the issues of dismantling and withdrawal of the missiles, bombers, and warheads, and verification of the withdrawal of missiles and bombers by cooperative measures, but was unable to formulate agreed terms for assurances against a U.S. invasion of Cuba and eventually left it to rest on the presidential statements. Kuznetsov's account of his meeting with Kennedy not only deals with Cuba (including the question of the Soviet military presence remaining there, a diplomatic dialogue on which continued into April 1963) but also with the subject of a nuclear test ban. A test ban was then being discussed in the Kennedy-Khrushchev exchanges, some of which (those messages in November and December 1962 that also dealt with the Cuban crisis) have been declassified and released by the two governments.

It is not my purpose here to try to summarize or even note the many interesting matters on which these documents throw light. The specific points I have raised, as well as my references to some aspects of the subject not dealt with, are only illustrative. These documents, and others that should follow, will undoubtedly add to our understanding. So, too, will the long overdue forthcoming two volumes of the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series dealing with Cuba in 1962-63.

**Telegram of Soviet Ambassador to Cuba  
A.I. Alekseev to the USSR Ministry of  
Foreign Affairs (MFA), 7 September 1962**

Recently, the ruling circles of the USA have noticeably activated a policy of provocation against Cuba; military preparations and its political isolation. Nearly every day, the air space and territorial waters of Cuba are violated by American airplanes, submarines and ships trying to establish permanent control over the territory of Cuba and diverting passenger and transport ships bound for Cuba. The landing of counter-revolutionary bands of spies and arms has been increased.

The constant acts of provocation are carried out from the territory of the USA base at Guantanamo, most often in the form of shooting at Cuban patrols. Especially noteworthy among all these provocations are far reaching acts like the August 24 shelling of the hotel in which mainly live Soviet specialists, and also the lies published by the Kennedy Administration about the alleged August 30 attack, in international waters, on an American airplane from two small Cuban ships. In the USA government's announcement, it is noted that in the event of a repeat of "an incident of this type," the armed forces of the United States "will take all necessary retaliatory measures. It is entirely evident

that this carries a great danger for Cuba, since it gives the most reactionary anti-Cuban authorities in the USA an opening at any moment to organize a provocation and unleash aggressive actions against Cuba.

In regard to the above two last actions undertaken by the USA, the government of Cuba came forward with corresponding official declarations signed by Fidel Castro. Both of these declarations were circulated as official documents to the UN. The goal of these declarations is to attract the attention of the appropriate international organizations and all of world public opinion to the provocation and far-reaching acts of the USA, to unmask the aggressive schemes of the United States in relation to Cuba, and to ward them off. In these declarations the government of Cuba precisely makes the point that the anti-Cuban actions and schemes of the USA presents a threat not only to Cuba, but to the whole world.

The series of provocations is now accompanied by a whipped up, broad anti-Cuba campaign in the USA press, striving with all its might to convince the population of the United States of the alleged presence in Cuba of large contingents of Soviet troops and of the fact that Cuba has turned into a military base of "world Communism" which presents a grave threat to the USA and all Latin American countries. Under this pretext, the press, certain American senators and

other public figures demand of the Kennedy administration the revival of the Monroe Doctrine, establishment of a sea and air blockade of Cuba, the bringing into force of the Treaty of Rio de Janeiro, and the military occupation of Cuba.

Following the signing in Moscow of the Soviet-Cuban communique in which the agreement of the Soviet government to provide assistance in strengthening its armed forces is noted, Kennedy in a public statement on September 4 pointed to the defensive nature of Cuba's military preparations and noted that Soviet military specialists are in Cuba to teach the Cubans how to use defensive equipment presented by the Soviet Union. Several USA press agencies, commenting on that part of Kennedy's statement, underline the evidence of that the fact the president of the USA obviously preferred an attempt to calm down those circles in the USA which are supporting quick, decisive actions against Cuba. Along with this, in Kennedy's statement there are contained insinuations of purported aggressive Cuban schemes regarding influence on the American continent and a threat to use "all necessary means" to "defend" the continent.

According to certain information, the USA State Department through its ambassadors notified the governments of Latin American countries that they can expect changes in the situation in

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in the Caribbean basin "if Castro's government does not come to its senses." More probably, in the near future the USA, using the pretext of an allegedly growing threat to the Western hemisphere, will embark on a long process of increasing the pressure on governments of the Latin-American countries and will probably convene a meeting of foreign ministers of the member-countries of the OAS to work out supplementary sanctions against Cuba. One can also assume that the most wildly aggressive powers in the USA (the Pentagon, the Cuban external counter-revolution, and others) will continue to exert pressure on Kennedy in order to realize the most decisive actions against Cuba.

The campaign of anti-Cuban hysteria has been conveyed via American propaganda to Latin American countries too. There the publication of articles and transmissions of radio programs of anti-Cuban and anti-Soviet content is constantly encouraged, while the external Cuban counter-revolution and local reaction put constant pressure on the governments of those countries, conduct loud demonstrations and terrorize individuals and organizations which speak out in defense of the Cuban revolution, and by means of bribery and blackmail get a range of people who have visited Cuba to make anti-Cuban statements, and so forth.

Simultaneously, the USA continues actively to conduct purely military preparations, aimed at repressing possible centers of the national-liberation movement in Latin America, and, given the appropriate circumstances, the Cuban revolution itself. This is shown by such facts as the organization by the United States of schools for instruction in methods of street-fighting and anti-partisan struggle in many Latin American countries (in Panama, Peru, Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia, and others); continuing intensive instruction of Cuban counter-revolutionaries in camps located on the territory of the USA, in Puerto Rico and in several Central American countries; many inspection trips to these bases, schools, and camps by responsible American military officials and the heads of the Cuban counter-revolution, including Miro Cardon; unflagging efforts of the USA aimed at strengthening the unity of the external Cuban counterrevolution and unity in the action of counter-revolutionary organizations active in Cuba itself, etc.

At the same time, the USA is actively continuing to conduct its efforts towards the political isolation of Cuba, particularly in Latin America. The USA is concentrating on putting pressure on the governments of Mexico and Brazil, which continue to express their support for the principle of non-interference and self-determination of peoples. This pressure is applied through economic means, and also by exploiting the domes-

tic reaction. The realization of Kennedy's visit to Mexico, following which he was to have quickly visited Brazil too (this visit was put off to the last months of the year), served the goals of determining the likelihood of attracting these two countries to the anti-Cuban plans of the USA.

Until now none of the attempts of the USA to attract Brazil and Mexico to its anti-Cuban adventures has had any success.

Under pressure from the USA, in a majority of Latin American countries the local authorities are applying the harshest measures aimed at forbidding or tightly limiting visits of any groups or individuals to Cuba, and also their contacts with Cuban delegations in third countries. People who visit Cuba or make contact with Cuban delegations in third countries are subject to arrest, repression, investigations upon return to their homeland. The USA does not lack means for organizing broad and loud provocations against Cuban delegations taking part in international quorums, as took place recently in Finland and Jamaica.

Referring to the decision taken at the meeting at Punta-del-Este about the exclusion of Cuba from the OAS, the USA is undertaking all measures to deny Cuba participation in any organizations connected with the inter-American system. In particular, they recently undertook an attempt to secure the exclusion of Cuba from the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). The unlawful denial of Cuba's application to join the so-called Latin American Free Trade Association is another example. In response to the American policy towards Cuba of provocation, military threats, and political isolation, the Cuban government is intensifying its efforts on strengthening its own armed forces, struggling with the internal counter-revolution, unmasking before world public opinion the aggressive designs of the USA, and broadening its anti-American propaganda in Latin America. At the end of August, taking into account the activation of provocative actions by the USA and the possible increase in the unleashing of counter-revolutionary bands and manifestations of domestic counter-revolution, preventive arrests were carried out in the country and strengthened control was established over many registered [known] counter-revolutionary elements and the places where they gather.

The Cuban leaders are paying serious attention to the question of strengthening the devotion to the revolution of the cadres of its diplomatic missions, particularly in Latin American countries; they are taking every opportunity, as was the case with their presentation at the Latin American Free Trade Association, to widen the sphere of their activity in Latin America; they are strengthening their connections with the Latin American peoples by inviting to Cuba society delegations and individual Latin American officials; in timely fashion and aggressively, they speak at international organizations, unmasking the aggressive schemes and actions of the USA; they are striving

to take part in any international forums at which there is a possibility to expose the aggressive character of American imperialism; they are strengthening Cuba's ties with African and Asian countries, etc.

The Cuban leadership believes, however, that the main guarantee of the development of the Cuban Revolution under conditions of possible direct American aggression is the readiness of the Soviet government to provide military assistance to Cuba and simultaneously to warn the USA of that fact. From this position, the joint Soviet-Cuban communique about [Ernesto "Che"] Guevara's visit to Moscow was greeted by the Cuban leaders and the vast majority of the Cuban people with great enthusiasm and gratitude. The Cuban leadership and Fidel Castro himself suggest that these warnings will help to prevail those forces in the USA which are warning of the outbreak now of a world conflict, and are staving off a direct American attack on Cuba in the near future.

In our opinion, in the near future the ruling circles of the USA will continue to expand the attacks on Cuba by all the above-mentioned means: provocations, the propaganda campaign, military preparations, actions of the domestic counter-revolution, political isolation, and so forth. Their success in drawing the Latin American countries into their aggressive actions will most depend on the positions of the governments of Mexico and Brazil.

We also suggest that the question of direct American actions against Cuba will be decided by the correlation of forces in American ruling circles which have differing approaches to questions of war and peace in the present period, and the struggle between them on these issues.

The mood of the overwhelming majority of the Cuban people is defiant, and regardless of the reality of the threat of intervention, no panic or fear before the threat which is hanging over Cuba is observed in the masses of the people. The American provocations make possible an ever-tighter unity of the Cuban workers and raise the political consciousness of the masses.

Regarding the provocations, the influence of the Soviet Union in Cuba has grown as never before, and our cooperation with the Cuban leaders has been strengthened even more.

In the interest of future productive work with our Cuban friends it would be desirable to receive from you for dispatch to the Cuban leaders information which we have about the plans of the USA government toward Cuba.

7.IX.62 ALEKSEEV

*[Source: Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation (AVP RF), Moscow, copy courtesy of National Security Archive (NSA), Washington, D.C.; translation by Mark H. Doctoroff.]*

**Telegram from Soviet Ambassador to Cuba  
Alekshev to the USSR MFA, 11 September  
1962**

TOP SECRET  
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CIPHERED TELEGRAM

In a conversation with me on September 11 of this year, [Cuban Defense Minister] Raoul Castro, noting the publication in the Soviet press of the TASS report, announced that it had been met with great enthusiasm by the Cuban leadership as timely and well-argued. Castro said that this report will be regarded by the whole Cuban people and supporters of the Cuban Revolution in other countries as a reliable shield against the aggressive intrigues of the American imperialists.

Castro also asserts that the thesis put forth in the report allows opponents of direct intervention in the United States itself—including Kennedy—to put up more decisive resistance to pressure from the aggressive forces. Regarding this, he, nonetheless, is allowing a sharp increase in anti-Soviet propaganda in the USA and in countries under its influence.

Raoul Castro believes that N.S. Khrushchev's conversation with [U.S. Secretary of the Interior Stewart] Udall on the Cuban question, during which the government of the USA was warned without any hint of propaganda about all the consequences which could result from its treacherous actions towards Cuba, is even more important. In Castro's opinion, the public announcement, as a consequence of this warning, will force the USA ruling circles to search for new means of strangling the Cuban revolution.

Castro considers as very important the part of the announcement which deals with the American bases around the USSR, and also the USA's Sixth and Seventh fleets in foreign waters and its effort to convince public opinion that this is the inalienable right of the USA.

The use of this line of argument to explain Soviet assistance to Cuba will be very easy for ordinary Latin Americans and for the people of the USA itself to understand.

Raoul Castro asserts that in the course of the developing situation the Americans are trying to isolate Cuba from the Latin American countries and to intensify the small-scale provocations against Cuba allegedly carried out by irresponsible elements of the Cuban counter-revolution, the apparent shelling of populated areas and foreign ships bound for Cuban ports from the sea.

Today's pirate attack on Cuban and English ships in the Caribbean area, in Castro's opinion, is aimed at frightening certain capitalist countries and to give the governments of NATO a pretext to forbid its ships to visit Cuban ports.

According to a dispatch by the Chairman of the Institute for Agricultural Reform C.R. [Carlos Rafael] Rodriguez, the crews of Japanese fishing boats who are now in Cuba, citing the danger, posed the question of leaving for their homeland right after the first attack on Havana.

C.R. Rodriguez announced that he had just spoken with Fidel Castro, who optimistically evaluates the developing situation and asserts that the Americans, following N.S. Khrushchev's conversation with Udall and the publication of the TASS dispatch, will have to reject attempts to organize direct aggression against Cuba.

F. Castro, according to Rodriguez, with great enthusiasm greeted these acts as a manifestation of genuine friendship for Cuba from the Soviet government and personally from N.S. Khrushchev, and expressed for this his sincere thanks.

Rodriguez recounted that the TASS declaration had been received with great enthusiasm in the factories, in peoples' estates, establishments and military units, where demonstrations and meetings are spontaneously conducted as a sign of gratitude to the Soviet Union.

Rodriguez believes that the publication of the TASS dispatch increases the authority of the Soviet Union in the eyes of the Cuban and other Latin American peoples and helps those not insignificant elements which are attracted to the unruliness of the revolutionism of our Chinese friends understand the difference between a truly revolutionary policy and a policy of revolutionary phrases.

In Rodriguez' opinion, in Cuba for a long time already Chinese representatives have had no opportunities to cultivate any Cuban leaders, but the publication of the Soviet-Cuban communique and the TASS dispatch once and for all undermines the ground beneath their feet and guarantees the unshakability of Cuban-Soviet friendship.

11.IX.62 ALEKSEEV

[Source: AVPRF, copy courtesy of NSA; translation by Mark H. Doctoroff.]

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**Telegram from Soviet Ambassador to the  
USA Anatoly F. Dobrynin to the USSR  
MFA, 4 October 1962**

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CIPHERED TELEGRAM

The meeting in Washington on the question of Cuba between the Foreign Ministers of the

countries of Latin America and [Secretary of State Dean] Rusk which concluded yesterday proceeded, according to information which we received, amidst sharp disagreements. A particularly big conflict arose around the text of the communique. The reception which was scheduled for 6 p.m. yesterday in honor of the participants in the meeting ended in confusion—most of the guests had left, when at 11 p.m. the ministers finally appeared, having been unable to agree on the text of the communique.

The draft of the communique which Rusk proposed was subjected to significant changes, primarily as a result of the criticism from the Mexican, Brazilian and Chilean representatives. There were changes along three main lines, despite the fact that the USA got the "tough measures" it was after.

First, on trade—the USA did not manage to secure recommendations for a total cut-off of trade with Cuba. The three countries mentioned above put up strong resistance to that recommendation, warning, by way of objection, that this would create a precedent which could be used in the future by the USA—in particular against those countries' trade with the Soviet Union and other Socialist countries. Chile, which has the most intensive trade with Cuba, was noteworthy for its insistence on its right to trade with Cuba.

Second, regarding so-called measures of security. The USA tried in the communique to single out the Caribbean Basin region as the most "threatened" by Cuba and in need therefore of its own separate organizational measures. As is known, even on the eve of the meeting plans were put forth for the creation inside the OAS of an independent regional organization for the Caribbean Basin with a membership of 10 countries. However, at the meeting Colombia and Venezuela, in particular, came out against such an organization, even though they were mentioned among the members of such an organization; seeing the opposition to the idea from Brazil, Chile, and Bolivia, [they] feared being isolated from the rest of the countries of South America if they had agreed to be included in an organization of the countries of Central America, the governments of which had long before recommended themselves as lackeys of the USA. For the same reason Mexico refused to participate in such an organization. For a general understanding of Mexico's position, we should note that precisely at her insistence the phrase (the end of the second paragraph of the communique, as transmitted by TASS) about recognition of the principle of non-interference in relations between Latin American countries.

Third, the USA attempt to formulate a point expressing a hope for a quick establishment of a Cuban government in exile also did not receive the necessary support from the biggest Latin American countries.

According to information received from sev-

eral participants in the meeting, Rusk put much pressure on the meeting. The point of the communique about trade with Cuba, which elicited the most disagreement, was accepted only after Rusk, referring to the mood in the USA Congress, threatened to cut off all American assistance to countries which would refuse to accept that point. In addition to this, Rusk and Kennedy informed the participants in the meeting about the unilateral measures which the government of the USA itself is now considering regarding a maximum limitation on the use of ships of various countries in trade with Cuba.

As indicated by certain information which we are now reconfirming, the following measures were named:

1. American ports will be closed to ships of those countries of which even a single ship would bring arms to Cuba. In essence, this is directed entirely against the USSR and socialist countries.

2. Ships of all countries will not be allowed into ports of the USA and will not be allowed to take on any cargo for the return voyage, if in the past they carried goods to Cuba from the countries of the "Soviet-Chinese" bloc. This refers equally to cargos of military supplies and those of consumer goods.

3. No cargo belonging to the government of the USA (for example, big shipments for "assistance programs") may be carried on foreign ships, if ships of the same owners are used for the shipment of goods to Cuba. This point is directed against "non-communist" countries and allies of the USA, many of whom have now reluctantly given in to American pressure.

4. No American-flag ships or ships the owners of which are American citizens (although ships may sail under a different flag, as is often done) are allowed to ship goods to or from Cuba.

Overall, this is a continuation of the prior unyielding line of the Kennedy Administration towards the tightening up of the economic blockade of Cuba, which is viewed here as one of the most effective means in the struggle with the Castro government and the increase in assistance to him from the Soviet Union.

The first reaction to the meeting in Washington diplomatic circles is summarized as follows: although the USA didn't get everything it wanted, the decisions of the meeting will be used by the Kennedy Administration to the maximum degree for the long-term isolation of Cuba from the countries of Latin America; for the strengthening of all aspects of the struggle against the Castro government. It is revealing that Kennedy today signed a declaration, accepted by the American Congress, to the effect that the USA can use troops in order to "prevent the spread of Cuban Communism to the American continent." At the same time he signed a Congressional bill, giving him the right to call up 150,000 reserves.

4.X.62 A. DOBRYNIN

[Source: AVP RF, copy courtesy of NSA; translation by Mark H. Doctoroff.]

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**Telegram from Soviet Ambassador to the  
USA Dobrynin to the USSR MFA, 18  
October 1962**

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CIPHERED TELEGRAM

On October 15-16 a closed briefing (i.e. "instructional meeting") for editors and leading observers of American newspapers, radio, and television was held at the State Department. According to information which we received, the USA policy toward Cuba occupied a major place in the work of the meeting. The essence of the statements of Kennedy, Rusk, Taylor, and Martin (aide to the Secretary of State) on this topic is summarized as follows:

I. "Don't joke about the idea of American intervention in Cuba," because such intervention would unavoidably prompt serious counter-measures from the USSR, if not directly aimed at the USA, then in other regions of the world, particularly in West Berlin; for many years [intervention] would complicate the mutual relations of the USA with the countries of Latin America, Asia, and Africa, and overall would create more problems than it solved.

2. At present Cuba is a political problem, and not a problem of security of the USA; thus, political, economic and other means are needed to solve it, rather than military.

Proceeding from this, the USA intends to achieve the greatest possible political, economic, and moral isolation of Cuba from other Latin American countries and other countries of the "free world," and also hinder the provision of assistance to Cuba from Socialist countries in all possible ways (short of, however, a sea blockade).

All this, in the calculations of the USA government, should cause serious economic and political complications for Cuba and ultimately (not in the coming weeks and months but in the next year or two) lead to the outbreak there of mass dissatisfaction and to huge anti-government demonstrations. The USA's concrete course in this case will depend on the situation.

3. At the present time the USA has no plans to create "a provisional Cuban government in exile," since in view of the mixed nature of the Cuban emigration it would be hardly possible to form a sufficiently authoritative government and in any case such a government, created on foreign territory, could not count on broad popularity

among the population of Cuba itself; in the same way the recognition of an exile government by the United States "would confuse" the issue of the American base at Guantanamo, depriving the USA of the formal right to demand of Castro's government recognition of Cuba's obligations re: the agreement about that base.

4. In spite of all the importance of the Cuba issue, it is not the main issue for the USA. The West Berlin issue at present remains sharpest and most fraught with dangers.

18/X-62 A.DOBRYNIN

[Source: AVP RF, copy courtesy of NSA; translation by Mark H. Doctoroff.]

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**Telegram from Soviet Foreign Minister A.A.  
Gromyko to the CC CPSU, 19 October 1962**

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CIPHERED TELEGRAM

To the CC CPSU

Everything which we know about the position of the USA government on the Cuban question allows us to conclude that the overall situation is completely satisfactory. This is confirmed by official announcements of American officials, including Kennedy, in his discussion with us on October 18, and all information which reaches us via unofficial channels and from representatives of other countries.

There is reason to believe that the USA is not preparing an intervention in Cuba and has put its money on obstructing Cuba's economic relations with the USSR and other countries, so as to destroy its economy and to cause hunger in the country, and in this way creating dissatisfaction among the population and prompting an uprising against the regime. This is based on a belief that the Soviet Union will not over a long period be able to provide Cuba with everything it needs.

The main reason for this American position is that the Administration and the overall American ruling circles are amazed by the Soviet Union's courage in assisting Cuba. Their reasoning is thus: The Soviet government recognizes the great importance which the Americans place on Cuba and its situation, and how painful that issue is to the USA. But the fact that the USSR, even knowing all that, still provides such aid to Cuba, means that it is fully committed to repulsing any American intervention in Cuba. There is no single opinion as to how and where that rebuff will be given, but that it will be given—they do not doubt.

In these last days the sharpness of the anti-Cuban campaign in the USA has subsided somewhat, while the sharpness of the West Berlin question has stood out all the more. Newspapers bleat about the approaching crisis vis a vis West Berlin, the impending in the very near future signing of the agreement with the GDR, and so on. The goal of such a change in the work of the propaganda machine is to divert somewhat public attention from the Cuba issue. All this is not without the participation of the White House.

Even the rumor to the effect that the Soviet Union has made it known that it can soften its position on the Cuban issue if the West will soften its own position in West Berlin was basically intended to mollify the public vis a vis Cuba.

The wide publication of the results of an election survey conducted here by the Gallup (sic) Institute showing that the vast majority of Americans are against an American intervention in Cuba serves this same goal. In this regard, we have to note that the leadership of the institute in the past traditionally were more sympathetic to Republicans. Therefore, its publication in this case deserves special attention. This was not done without the encouragement of the White House either; in this way a nudge was given to the extremist groups in Congress which support extreme measures.

Also deserving of attention is the fact that Congress has now "gone on recess." This suggests that the pressure on Kennedy from the extreme groups in Congress will be less during the recess.

The position of the USA allies, particularly the British, also played a role. They did not support calls for the unleashing of aggression against Cuba, although they equally approved of other anti-Cuban steps of the USA.

It is not possible, of course, to be completely insured against USA surprises and adventures, even in the Cuba issue; all the same, taking into account the undeniable objective facts and the corresponding official public statements, and also the assurances given to us that the USA has no plans for intervention in Cuba (which undeniably commits them in many respects), it is possible to say that in these conditions a USA military adventure against Cuba is almost impossible to imagine.

19/X-62 A. GROMYKO

[Source: AVPRF, copy courtesy of NSA; translation by Mark H. Doctoroff.]

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Telegram from Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko to the CC CPSU, 20 October 1962

On October 18 a conversation with Rusk took place.

Rusk, continuing my conversation with Kennedy, touched on the Cuba issue. He said, that President Kennedy considers that issue very important, that it carries great significance for the USA, since it concerns the security of the Western hemisphere. As the President said, the USA has no intention of intervening with its own armed forces in Cuba. But the USA proceeds from the fact that everything that is happening in Cuba is of a defensive nature and will not turn Cuba into an attack platform against the USA and the countries of Latin America.

Besides this, Rusk announced, the USA, in defining its position on the Cuban issue, as announced by the President in his conversation with us, proceeds also from the fact that Cuba will not undertake actions aimed at foisting its system and regime on the other countries of Latin America.

The government of the USA places extremely high significance on these two conditions. It would be hoped that neither the first, nor the second, would take place.

As far as the domestic regime on Cuba is concerned, the USA decisively views it as a regime which contradicts the interests of security in the Western hemisphere.

Having heard Rusk out, I said that the Cuban issue had been caused by the hostile policy of the USA towards Cuba. The USA for some reason believes that it must dictate to the Cubans the sort of domestic regime that should exist in Cuba, and the social structure under which the Cubans should live. But on what basis is the USA trying to appropriate for itself the right to dictate to the Cubans how to conduct their internal affairs? There is no such basis, and such a basis cannot be. Cuba belongs to the Cubans, not to Americans.

Perhaps, I declared, Rusk can tell me, whither the principles of the UN Charter in American policy towards Cuba? They're not there. The actions of the USA are in flagrant contradiction with these principles. The USA is undertaking steps to cause hunger in Cuba. The actions which it is undertaking towards this end unmask the USA policy even more clearly. The Cubans, with ever more decisiveness, are speaking out and will continue to speak out in defense of their country and will strengthen its defenses.

The Soviet Union is helping Cuba. It is trying to provide the Cubans with grain, and help to put its economy on a sound footing. This can not present any danger to the USA. Soviet specialists are helping Cuban soldiers to master certain types of defensive weapons. This can't present any threat to the USA either. Overall, so far as the declaration that Cuba may present a threat to the security of the USA and countries of Latin America is concerned, such declarations are evidently intended for naive people. Even Americans themselves don't believe it.

Rusk said that he does not agree that Cuba cannot present a threat to the USA. Cuba without the Soviet Union, he declared, is one thing; a Cuba where "Soviet operators" run things is something different.

The USA government and he, Rusk, are baselessly scaring the American people with "Soviet operators," I answered. The Soviet Union is providing assistance to Cuba in only a few areas, including whatever we can do to strengthen its defensive capability. The Cubans themselves are running everything on Cuba, and the USA knows that perfectly well.

The situation has rapidly worsened, declared Rusk, since July of this year. Before July the situation caused no alarm. But from July, Soviet weapons have flowed into Cuba. So far it seems, according to U.S. Government data, that these are defensive weapons. But it is unclear how the situation will develop in the future.

Besides this, declared Rusk, according to precise data in American possession, the Cuban regime continues to actively carry out subversive work against a number of Latin American countries.

I said that the Cubans should have come to conclusions about their own defense from the intervention on Cuba by the immigrant riff-raff organized by the Americans and financed by them. They came to such a conclusion, deciding to strengthen their own defense capability. July has no significance here. Cuba represented no threat to the USA either before July, or after July.

As far as the declarations regarding subversive work by the Cubans is concerned, I can only say that these declarations are in contradiction with the information which we possess.

All the same, declared Rusk, in July some kind of sudden change took place. And that sudden change significantly complicated the situation.

Regarding the issue of the Cubans' subversive activities, said Rusk, the USA government has irrefutable proof of the assistance provided by them to various subversive groups in Latin America, up until the present day. For the government of the USA there is nothing to discuss. It knows for sure that the Cubans provide such help and are carrying out subversive work against a number of Latin American countries.

Rusk expansively spoke of the "community of interests" of the countries of the Western Hemisphere. Not mentioning the "Monroe Doctrine," he essentially tried to defend it, stressing the solidarity of the countries of the Western Hemisphere and the community of interests of their security.

I said that in the policy of the USA and in Rusk's considerations regarding Cuba the countries somehow get lost, while the discussion is about the hemisphere. But in this hemisphere there are sovereign countries. Each one of them has a right to decide its own internal affairs upon

consideration by its people. Cuba is one of these sovereign states.

Besides that, I declared, if Rusk's reasoning and the entire conception which the USA government defends were to be applied to Europe and to Asia, then no doubt the conclusions which would flow from that would not please the USA. It comes out that the Americans consider themselves to have a right to be in a number of countries of Europe, Asia, and other regions of the world, if sometimes they don't even ask them about this, while certain others can not even respond to an appeal for assistance in providing its own people with bread and strengthening its security in the face of a threat of intervention. With such a conception the Soviet Union cannot agree. It is hoped that the USA government too will more soberly approach the entire Cuban issue and will reject a hostile policy toward Cuba.

If the USA government has some sort of claims toward Cuba, for instance, financial, then it can bring them up with the Cubans at negotiations aimed at settling them, and the Cubans, as is known, are prepared for this.

Yes, declared Rusk, but nonetheless Cuba has violated the peace on the continent, nonetheless, beginning in July, the situation has taken a dangerous turn. The Soviet Union appeared in Cuba. A large quantity of Soviet weapons appeared in Cuba. All this has complicated the situation.

No matter how often Rusk repeats, I declared, the assertion about some sort of turn of events in July, about the danger allegedly emanating from Cuba, in actuality, the situation remains simpler. The Cubans want Cuba to belong to them, and not to the USA.

Maybe Rusk will reject the presence of the USA, the presence of American military bases and numerous military advisers in such countries like Turkey, Pakistan, Japan, not even speaking about such countries as England, Italy, and a number of other countries of Western Europe, and also Asia and Africa. It appears that the USA can have military bases in these countries, conclude with them military agreements, while the Soviet Union can not even provide assistance in support of the Cuban economy and for the strengthening of the defense capability of Cuba.

Rusk said that the Soviet Union is exaggerating the significance of American foreign military bases, believing that the USA has bases even in Pakistan, and practically in Iran. In many countries, on the territory of which, in your opinion, there are American military bases, in actuality there are none. Iran, for example, recently took a big step forward towards the Soviet Union. Overall, the significance of our bases is inflated.

To this statement I answered in such a way, that the USA foreign military bases—this is a subject which is pretty well known, practically

every day American generals and several ministers speak about it.

Regarding Iran, I said to Rusk that we positively view the agreement between the Soviet Union and Iran that foreign missile bases will not be built on Iranian territory. But Rusk will not, apparently, deny that the Iranian Army is led by American military advisers, that Turkey has had such bases for a long time, that the territory of Japan has become an American military base, the territory of England and a number of other countries have been military springboards of the USA for a long time. About the same could be said about many other countries.

Rusk declared that—whether I believe him or not—that's something else, but he categorically asserts that besides the territory of the USA itself, American missiles and atomic weapons are in only three countries.

Here I said: without a doubt, of course, England is among those countries?

Yes, declared Rusk, England is one of them. He didn't name the others.

As far as Japan is concerned, declared Rusk, I categorically assert that neither missiles, nor nuclear weapons of the USA are in Japan. They don't have any of those weapons in South Korea either, if, of course, the actions of North Korea will not make it necessary to change that situation.

In general, declared Rusk, the significance of American foreign military bases is greatly exaggerated, and they don't deserve it. In several countries, in actual fact there are not such bases, while you, Rusk said, believe that there are. In particular, the Scandinavian countries are among those countries.

Responding to that, I said, that in certain countries maybe there are not today, physically, those or other types of weapons. You, Americans, know better. But the USA has military agreements with those countries which include an obligation to let these types of American weapons into the country at any time. This is hardly different from the practical existence of American military bases in such countries, especially considering that certain types of weapons may at the present time be delivered very quickly.

Rusk did not respond to that statement, and overall it was evident that precisely that is the situation in several of the participants in the military blocs of the Western powers.

And so, I declared, the Americans have no grounds to reproach Cuba and the Cubans for steps of a purely defensive character, and, moreover, to conduct toward Cuba a hostile and aggressive policy. Cuba simply wants to be independent. That which the Cubans do to strengthen their country and its independence—that doesn't present a danger to anyone, all the more to such a great power like the USA. Any assertions about the existence of such a danger are just absurd.

Rusk said that the USA is interested in Cuba just as the Soviet Union was interested in Hungary

in 1956.

I deflected this effort to introduce an analogy and I briefly pointed out the groundlessness of such an analogy.

Rusk said that he did not agree with our interpretation of the question and rejection of the analogy.

He then began to speak on the subject of the policy of the Soviet Union after the Second World War, partly trying to tie these musings with the Cuban issue and partly with the issue of American foreign military bases.

He said that "in the Stalinist period" the Soviet Union conducted a foreign policy which forced the USA to create its bases overseas and to deploy its forces there. He gave an alleged example—Korea and the Korean peninsula. He said, that before the events in Korea the USA in fact did not have a single division up to strength. At that time the USA practically did not have a battleworthy army available. But the situation changed because of the Korean War. Before this there was such a thing as the Berlin Blockade, which also played a definite role in the change in the American policy. All this is reflected, said Rusk, in the armament program.

He again began to speak about the influence of the "Stalinist policy" on the policy and actions of the Western powers. The Western powers, including the USA, cannot but take that into account even now.

Responding to these statements of Rusk, I stressed that the Secretary of State of the USA had drawn an extremely depressing and one-sided picture of the foreign policy of the USSR in the postwar period, including during the Stalin period. No doubt Rusk, like other U.S. officials, will not deny a great historical fact: besides the fact that the army of the Soviet Union routed the Hitlerite army and as a powerful avalanche moved into Western Europe, it was not used contrary to the alliance agreements and had stopped following the defeat of Hitler's Germany. And in that situation, if the Soviet Union, the Soviet government, had had expansionist intentions, it could have occupied all of Western Europe. But the Soviet Union had not done that and had not started to do it. That already by itself is an eloquent answer to the attempt to cast doubt on the foreign policy of the Soviet Union and on its actions in the postwar period.

You know, I declared to Rusk, that our CC and the Soviet government, at the initiative of N.S. Khrushchev, have taken a number of foreign policy steps which earlier had not been taken. You are familiar, no doubt, with that which has been done in the foreign policy of the USSR regarding the condemnation of Stalin's Cult of Personality. You know, in particular, about the signing of the Austrian State Treaty, which was evaluated positively throughout the world and which helped to make possible an improvement of the situation in central Europe. But we cat-

egorically reject any attempts to generalize or to draw conclusions about Soviet foreign policy in the postwar period, which USA government officials make with the intent, apparently, of whitewashing its own policy, in this case towards Cuba.

Rusk did not challenge the declaration regarding the capability of the Soviet army to occupy all of Europe, if the Soviet Union had striven for that after the rout of Hitler's Germany. Nor did he challenge the significance of the foreign policy steps of the Soviet Union introduced after the condemnation of the cult of personality of Stalin. More to the point, he let it be understood that in general he shares these thoughts, although he did not make any direct comments.

However, he at this point started to talk about the fact that the USA, at the end of the war, and also in the first postwar period to the greatest extent conducted itself well. It, declared Rusk, had not tried to use the advantage which it had at that time vis a vis its monopoly possession of the atomic bomb.

I let him know that that, apparently, had not been so much because the United States had wanted to conduct itself well, as that the atomic bomb at that time could not play a decisive role in the serious standoff of the leading powers.

Rusk did not challenge this declaration, but all the same expressed the thought that the USA had had an advantage at that time in its possession of the atomic bomb and that it had not even tried to use it politically.

In this connection he brought up the Baruch Plan, saying that he was wondering why the Soviet Union had not associated itself with the Baruch Plan.

I gave an appropriate answer and briefly set forth our position. I stressed the point that the Baruch Plan was a one-sided plan, advantageous only to the USA, that it had not even envisioned the destruction of nuclear weapons, rather, under a screen of allegedly international control had left this weapon at the practical disposal of the USA, and even on the territory of the USA.

Rusk did not go into details and limited himself to the above comments about the Baruch Plan.

Suddenly Rusk jumped to the issue of the Communist ideology and the influence of the Soviet Union on other countries. He tried to assert that the main reason of all the complications in international affairs is that the Soviet Union by some or other means influences the situation in other countries, inspires dissatisfaction with the existing regimes and so on. He also complained because the USA does not assert such influence and cannot assert it, since it does not enter into its political plans. Vis a vis this reasoning he again returned to Cuba, but basically repeated what he had said earlier. He ended his argument by commenting again that July had brought a change for the worse to the events in

Cuba, and that that greatly alarms the USA government and Americans.

Rusk further said, wouldn't it be possible to consider the issue of increasing the number of Security Council member-countries from 11 to 13, that is, in other words, increasing the number of non-permanent members from six to eight. From his comments it was clear that he was talking about a change in the membership of the UN and introducing into the membership corresponding changes.

I said that the step Rusk had mentioned was impossible to implement, simply because the PRC—one of the permanent members of the Security Council—is not participating in the work of the UN because of the policy of the U.S. Government. Without the PRC, I declared, we will not agree even to consider that issue.

Rusk in fact did not challenge our declaration, understanding that the step he had recommended was not realistic in view of our objections. Here he noted that China, evidently has more than a few problems, including internal, economic ones.

In response I said that they have certain difficulties, but the food situation had now significantly improved and was not as difficult as it was portrayed by certain organs of the American press.

Rusk touched on the question of the Chinese-Indian border conflict. He asked what is going on there and why did the argument arise?

I said, that the argument, as is well known to Rusk, was caused by mutual territorial claims in the border region. The Soviet government believes that the sooner the sides come to an agreement on a mutually acceptable basis, the better. I let Rusk know that our discussion of this issue apparently would hardly help the matter.

Rusk agreed that yes, of course, this was an issue between the two countries—the PRC and India—but that nonetheless there is some old agreed boundary, which, considering everything, is the correct border line.

Evidently, Rusk's own goal was to let us know that the government of the USA looks favorably on the Indian position. But he spoke about that as if offhandedly, obviously not wanting to create the impression that the USA was greatly interested in that issue. He also jokingly observed that the Chinese-Indian border conflict is, excuse me, the only issue on which the positions of the PRC and Taiwan correspond.

With this, the conversation, which had continued with some difficulty for about two hours, ended. Further there was a conversation on the German Question, the contents of which are submitted separately.

A short general evaluation of this conversation with Rusk: Rusk tried again to stress, obviously at Kennedy's behest, that the USA gives great importance to the Cuban issue and considers it the most painful for the USA. He only in

passing touched on Kennedy's declaration, made in the conversation with us, about the fact that the USA has no intentions to intervene in Cuba (with a reservation regarding the threat to the security of the USA and the countries of Latin America). Rusk's reasoning revolved mostly around a circle of questions related to Soviet assistance to Cuba, primarily arms.

By Rusk's behavior it was possible to observe how painfully the American leaders are suffering the fact that the Soviet Union decisively has stood on the side of Cuba, and that the Cubans are conducting themselves bravely and confidently. Kennedy managed to hide his feelings better. But he too, when he spoke about Cuba, formulated his ideas with emphasis, slowly, obviously weighing every word. It is characteristic that Rusk, during our entire conversation with Kennedy, sat absolutely silently, and red "like a crab." In the conversation with him later he couldn't hide his feelings very well.

20.X.62 A. GROMYKO

[Source: AVPRF, copy courtesy of NSA; translation by Mark H. Doctoroff.]

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**Telegram from Soviet Ambassador to the USA Dobrynin to the USSR MFA, 22 October 1962**

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CIPHERED TELEGRAM

TOP PRIORITY

At 6 in the evening Washington time Secretary of State Rusk invited me to his place.

Rusk said that he had a commission from the president to send via me a personal presidential message to N.S. Khrushchev /to be sent separately/, and also to provide for information the text of the president's address to the American people, which he intends to deliver at 7 this evening on radio and television /transmitted by TASS/.

Rusk warned then that at this time he has instructions not to answer any questions on the text of both documents and not to comment on them.

"These documents, he added, speak for themselves."

Rusk was told that the actions of the USA government cannot be justified by the absolutely unconvincing motives which are not grounded in the factual situation and to which the president refers, and that these actions have a downright



provocative character, and that all responsibility for possible grave consequences of the aforementioned actions of the United States will be entirely on the American administration.

I also expressed surprise that neither the president nor Rusk found it necessary to have an open talk on all the questions raised in the address, with A.A. Gromyko, with whom they met only a few days ago, while now the USA administration is seeking with artificial means to create a grave crisis. The Soviet Union fears no threats and is prepared to meet them in an appropriate way, if the voice of reason would not triumph in the governing circles of the USA.

Rusk did not respond. He was clearly in a nervous and agitated mood, even though he tried to conceal it. At that the meeting came to an end. Then almost all ambassadors /except socialist/ were summoned to the State Department, and they have been given, by groups, the text of the president's address with corresponding commentaries by the senior officials of the State Department.

Before I left, Rusk noted that there is no plan, so far, to publish the personal letter of Kennedy to N.S. Khrushchev, but overall this cannot be excluded.

22.X.62 A. DOBRYNIN

[Source: AVP RF, copy courtesy of NSA;  
translation by Vladislav M. Zubok.]

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**Telegram from Soviet Ambassador to Cuba  
Alekseev to the USSR MFA, 22 October 1962**

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CIPHERED TELEGRAM

Regarding the threats of the USA toward Cuba, we remain in constant contact with Fidel Castro and Raoul Castro.

The Cuban command gave an order for full mobilization of the army and occupation of defensive positions. Besides telegraphic dispatches of information agencies and Kennedy's speeches, our friends have no other information.

We will quickly inform you of all new facts.

We are taking steps to ensure security and the organization of a duty roster in Soviet institutions.

Please issue an order to the radio center to listen to us around the clock.

22.X.62 ALEKSEEV

[Source: AVP RF, copy courtesy of NSA;  
translation by Mark H. Doctoroff.]

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**Telegram from Soviet Ambassador to the  
USA Dobrynin to the USSR MFA,  
23 October 1962**

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CIPHERED TELEGRAM

Following Kennedy's speech on the Cuban issue yesterday, a broad campaign was deployed here, called forth in order to impart to the developing situation even more extraordinariness and seriousness than was done in Kennedy's speech itself.

In a briefing conducted by the USA Ministry of Defense yesterday evening, [Secretary of Defense Robert S.] McNamara categorically declared that the USA will not stop short of sinking Soviet ships which are bringing "offensive types" of weapons to Cuba, if those ships will refuse to obey the demands of American warships.

It is reported that the President's official proclamation about the introduction into force of measures to assert a quarantine on the delivery to Cuba of offensive types of weapons will be published before the end of the day today or tomorrow morning after the formal agreement with other members of the Organization of American States. For the practical implementation of the quarantine in the area of Cuba, there has been assembled, according to the reports of military observers, around 450 military ships, more than 1,200 airplanes and around 200 thousand soldiers.

Almost without interruption, the commentaries which are broadcast on radio and television—and also the commentaries which appeared in today's morning newspapers—are directed towards supercharging the atmosphere and predictions of an early "test of force," as soon as the first Soviet ship approaches Cuba (we broadcast similar commentaries via TASS).

An analysis of the public statements which Kennedy has made, his message to N.S. Khrushchev, and also the statements of officials who are close to the White House and the State allow us to make, as it is presented to us, a preliminary conclusion that the measures which have been undertaken by the Kennedy Administration in regard to Cuba are the product of a range of domestic and foreign policy considerations, the most important of which, apparently, are the following.

I. To try to "take up the gauntlet" of that challenge which Kennedy believes has been

thrown down by the Soviet Union to the USA in the form of military deliveries to Cuba. Regarding this, insofar as up to now a direct military attack by the USA on Cuba is not on the table (the President, as is known, also persistently stressed this during the meeting with A.A. Gromyko), Kennedy evidently is counting on the Soviet Union in this case not responding with military actions directly against the USA itself or by delivering a blow to their positions in West Berlin. As a result, in Kennedy's thinking, the United States will succeed in establishing at least in part the correlation of forces which existed in the world before July, that is before the announcement of our military deliveries to Cuba, which delivered a serious blow to the USA's positions as the leader of the capitalist world and even more constrained their freedom of action on issues like the one in West Berlin.

Kennedy apparently believes that a further demonstration by the United States of indecisiveness and lack of will to risk a war with the Soviet Union for the sake of its positions would unavoidably lead to an even quicker and more serious undermining of their positions around the globe.

2. That which Kennedy said yesterday in his appeal to the American people and the complex of measures which were announced in this connection by the USA government in fact touch not only upon Cuba alone or our deliveries of weapons to it, or even our missiles for Cuba. More to the point, it is a decision connected with a certain risk and determined by a whiff of adventurism, to try to bring to a stop now the development of events in the whole world, which are generally disadvantageous to the USA.

In this regard, some information which we have just received by confidential means and which we are now reconfirming, may be interesting. According to this information, prior to the President's decision a hot discussion was conducted recently in the government regarding the future foreign policy course of the USA following the appearance of information about the deliveries of Soviet missiles to Cuba. [Attorney General] R. Kennedy, McNamara, Rusk, Chief of the CIA [John] McCone, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff asserted that since Vienna the status quo in the world had changed, and had changed not to the benefit of the USA, as a result of the well-known development of the Cuban events, in particular the open deliveries of Soviet weapons to Cuba. The issue is not the weapons themselves, insofar as they do not have much significance from a purely military point of view, rather it is that great political loss which the Kennedy government suffered in the eyes of the whole world and particularly of its American allies and neighbors when it (the USA government) turned out to be not in a position—for the first time in the history of the USA—to prevent "the penetration and establishment of influence" by another great power, the USSR, in the Western

Hemisphere itself. What then of the obligations of the USA in other parts of the world? And all this is happening at a moment—as asserted by representatives of the military brass—when America for the time being still has an advantage over the Soviet Union in nuclear missiles, an advantage which is gradually being liquidated by the successes of Soviet weapons, and now also by the creation of a missile base in Cuba in direct proximity with the USA. This means, the American chiefs of staff maintain, that time is not waiting, if the Kennedy government really intends to prevent a further disadvantageous development of events.

In Berlin also, the USA is constantly on the defensive, which does not add to the Administration's prestige. The latest meetings with A.A. Gromyko (this argument was attributed to Rusk) strengthened the President's and Rusk's belief that the Soviet Union seriously intends to sign a peace treaty with the GDR, with all the consequences that will flow from that for the USA. This, almost unavoidably will bring about a crisis at the end of the year, since the USA will not withdraw its forces from West Berlin. Wouldn't it be better then to try to force the Soviet Union to retreat by "striking a blow on the Cuban issue ["—no close quotation mark—ed.], which gives more benefits to the USA than the Berlin question, if the moods of public opinion and geographic and military-strategic factors are taken into account[?]. Precisely on the Cuban issue it is best for President Kennedy to take a firm position and to "demonstrate his character." This approximately was the basic argument of those government representatives who support a more hard-line course of action (several of them speculated also that the President maintains the opinion that the Soviet government apparently does not particularly believe in the President's steadfastness following the failure of last year's incursion in Cuba). It follows, evidently, to recognize that the supporters of this course for the time being have taken the upper hand in the USA government.

3. Having created the extraordinary situation around Cuba, the Kennedy administration is hoping that in that situation it will be able quickly to get from its NATO allies and from the Latin American countries support for its course towards the full isolation of Cuba from the "free world," and the ultimate overthrow of the current government of Cuba. In this regard it should be noted that although the West European and Latin American diplomats express alarm about the possible consequences of realizing in practice the announced "quarantine" of Cuba, they express, as a rule, confidence that their governments under current conditions will not be able to deviate from support for the USA. In particular, it became known to us that the Chilean representative in the Organization of American States received an instruction to support the USA proposals this

time. Brazil and Mexico are also departing from their previous positions after having been subject to strong pressure from the USA, which is asserting that the Soviet missiles now threaten the Latin American countries too. The decision of the Organization of American States which was just accepted (transmitted via TASS) in fact in support of the course of action of the USA shows that the Kennedy administration is succeeding in binding the governments of these countries to its will under conditions of the prewar psychosis which has now been created in the USA. We should, it's true, note that Brazil, Mexico and Bolivia abstained from the vote on the paragraph which envisaged the application of force.

4. On the domestic political plane, Kennedy obviously is counting on his last step to pull the rug out from under the legs of the Republicans, whose leadership in recent days officially announced that they consider the Cuban issue a fundamental issue of the election campaign, having in essence accused the administration of inactivity on that issue.

However, it is necessary to stress that the events connected with Kennedy's announcement yesterday obviously have overtaken the significance of electoral considerations and that these considerations now are moving to the background.

Overall, the impression is being created that, reserving a certain possibility not to let the matter lead to an open military confrontation—this can be seen in his proclamation in general form by the readiness which he expressed to continue "peace negotiations" with the Soviet side on settling controversial issues, including the Cuban issue and several other questions—Kennedy at the same time consciously and sufficiently provocatively is aiming towards an abrupt aggravation of relations with the Soviet Union in accord with the above-mentioned considerations.

In this regard it is as if this time he is ready to go pretty far in a test of strength with the Soviet Union, hoping that in the location of the conflict (Cuba) which was chosen by him, the President, the USA has a greater chance than the USSR, and that in the final analysis the Soviet government will refuse to increase the military power of Cuba, not wishing to let a major war break out. Under these conditions it is seen as expedient, while observing the necessary precautions, to at the same time review certain steps which would demonstrate the resolve of the USSR to give an appropriate rebuff to the USA and which would make the USA vulnerable to the possibility of actions which we may take in response. In particular, as it seems to us, it would be possible to review the question of hinting to Kennedy in no uncertain terms about the possibility of reprisals against the Western powers in West Berlin (as a first step, the organization of a blockade of ground routes, leaving out for the time being air routes so as not to give grounds for a quick confrontation).

Besides this, taking into account the future development of events and as a means of putting extra pressure on the USA government, it is possible that it would make sense to undertake such measures as, for instance, calling back from the USA Soviet theatrical collectives and Soviet students (sending for them a special airplane), which should show to the Americans the seriousness of our intentions in regard to the events in Cuba.

However, in our opinion it is not necessary to hurry on all the above measures, since an extreme aggravation of the situation, it goes without saying, would not be in our interests. It would make sense to use also the desire of neutral states, and not only them, to find a way to settle the current conflict. Such moods are clearly felt not only at the UN, but also among the diplomatic corps here.

Overall, here in Washington the tension around this situation continues to grow. It seems as if the Americans themselves are beginning to worry a lot, anticipating the arrival in Cuba of the first Soviet ship (many people are expressing this question directly to the Embassy) and how this first "test of strength" will end. This atmosphere of tense waiting entered a new phase with the publication just now of the President's official proclamation which announces the entering into force of the ban on delivering "offensive weapons" to Cuba as of 14 hours [2 p.m.] (Greenwich Mean Time) on 24 October.

23.X.62 A. DOBRYNIN

[Source: AVPRF, copy courtesy of NSA; translation by Mark H. Doctoroff.]

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Telegram from Soviet Ambassador to the  
USA Dobrynin to the USSR MFA,  
24 October 1962

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CIPHERED TELEGRAM

Late in the evening of October 23, R. Kennedy came to visit me. He was in an obviously excited condition and his speech was rich in repetitions and digressions. R. Kennedy said approximately the following.

I came on my own personal initiative without any assignment from the President. I considered it necessary to do this in order to clarify what exactly led to the current, extremely serious development of events. Most important is the fact that the personal relations between the President and the Soviet premier have suffered heavy damage. President Kennedy feels deceived and these

feelings found their own reflection in his appeal to the American people.

From the very beginning, continued R. Kennedy, the Soviet side—N.S. Khrushchev, the Soviet government in its pronouncements and the Soviet ambassador during confidential meetings - have stressed the defensive nature of the weapons which are being delivered to Cuba. You, for instance, said R. Kennedy to me, told me about the exclusively defensive goals of the delivery of Soviet weapons, in particular, the missile weapons, during our meeting at the beginning of September. I understood you then as saying that we were talking only about /and in the future, too/ missiles of a relatively small range of action for the defense of Cuba itself and the approaches to it, but not about long range missiles which could strike practically the entire territory of the USA. I told this to the President, who accepted it with satisfaction as the position of the Soviet government. There was a TASS declaration in the name of the Soviet government in which it was clearly stated that all military deliveries to Cuba are intended exclusively for defensive goals. The President and the government of the USA understood this as the true position of the USSR.

With even greater feelings of trust we took the corresponding declarations /public and confidential/ of the head of the Soviet government, who, despite the big disagreements and frequent aggravations in relations between our countries, the President has always trusted on a personal level. The message which had been sent by N.S. Khrushchev via the Soviet ambassador and [Kennedy adviser Theodore] Sorensen, about the fact that during the election campaign in the USA the Soviet side would not do anything to complicate the international situation and worsen relations between our countries, had made a great impression on the President.

All this led to the fact that the President believed everything which was said from the Soviet side, and in essence staked on that card his own political fate, having publicly announced to the USA, that the arms deliveries to Cuba carry a purely defensive character, although a number of Republicans have asserted to the contrary. And then the President suddenly receives trustworthy information to the effect that in Cuba, contrary to everything which had been said by the Soviet representatives, including the latest assurances, made very recently by A. A. Gromyko during his meeting with the President, there had appeared Soviet missiles with a range of action which cover almost the entire territory of the USA. Is this weapon really for the defensive purposes about which you, Mr. Ambassador, A. A. Gromyko, the Soviet government and N.S. Khrushchev had spoken?

The President felt himself deceived, and deceived intentionally. He is convinced of that even now. It was for him a great disappointment,

or, speaking directly, a heavy blow to everything in which he had believed and which he had strived to preserve in personal relations with the head of the Soviet government: mutual trust in each other's personal assurances. As a result, the reaction which had found its reflection in the President's declaration and the extremely serious current events which are connected with it and which can still lead no one knows where.

Stressing with great determination that I reject his assertions about some sort of "deception" as entirely not corresponding to reality and as presenting the actions and motives of the Soviet side in a perverted light, I asked R. Kennedy why the President - if he had some sort of doubts - had not negotiated directly and openly with A. A. Gromyko, with whom there had been a meeting just a few days ago, but rather had begun actions, the seriousness of the consequences of which for the entire world are entirely unforeseeable. Before setting off on that dangerous path, fraught with a direct military confrontation between our countries, why not use, for instance, the confidential channels which we have and appeal directly to the head of the Soviet government.

R. Kennedy said the President had decided not to address A. A. Gromyko about this for the following two reasons: first, everything which the Soviet minister had set forth had, evidently according to the instructions of the Soviet government, been expressed in very harsh tones, so a discussion with him hardly could have been of much use; second, he had once again asserted the defensive character of the deliveries of Soviet weapons, although the President at that moment knew that this is not so, that they had deceived him again. As far as the confidential channel is concerned, what sense would that have made, if on the highest level - the level of the Minister of Foreign Affairs - precisely the same is said, although the facts are directly contradictory[?] To that same point, added R. Kennedy, long ago I myself in fact received the same sort of assurances from the Soviet ambassador, however, all that subsequently turned out to be entirely not so.

- Tell me, - R. Kennedy said to me further - [do] you, as the Soviet ambassador, have from your government information about the presence now in Cuba of around half a dozen (here he corrected himself, saying that that number may not be entirely accurate, but the fact remains a fact) missiles, capable of reaching almost any point in the United States?

In my turn I asked R. Kennedy why I should believe his information, when he himself does not want to recognize or respect that which the other side is saying to him. To that same point, even the President himself in his speech in fact had spoken only about some emplacements for missiles, which they allegedly had "observed," but not about the missiles themselves.

- There, you see - R. Kennedy quickly put forth, - what would have been the point of us

contacting you via the confidential channel, if, as it appears, even the Ambassador, who has, as far as we know, the full trust of his government, does not know that long-range missiles which can strike the USA, rather than defensive missiles which are capable of defending Cuba from any sort of attack on the approaches to it, have already been provided to Cuba[?] It comes out that when you and I spoke earlier, you also did not have reliable information, although the conversation was about the defensive character of those weapons deliveries, including the future deliveries to Cuba, and everything about this was passed on to the President.

I categorically responded to R. Kennedy's thoughts about the information which I had received from the government, stressing that this was exclusively within the competence of the Soviet government. Simultaneously, his thoughts of "deception" were rejected again. Further, in calm but firm tones I set forth in detail our position on the Cuban issue, taking into account the Soviet government's latest announcement on Cuba, N.S. Khrushchev's letter in response to the President, and also other speeches and conversations of N.S. Khrushchev.

I particularly stressed the circumstance that, as far as is known to me, the head of the Soviet government values the warm relations with the President. N.S. Khrushchev recently spoke about that in particular in a conversation with [U.S.] Ambassador [to Moscow Foy] Kohler. I hope that the President also maintains the same point of view, - I added. On the relationships between the heads of our governments, on which history has placed special responsibility for the fate of the world, a lot really does depend; in particular, whether there will be peace or war. The Soviet government acts only in the interests of preserving and strengthening peace and calls on the United States government to act this way too. Stressing again the basic principles of our policy on which we will insist without any compromises (in the spirit of our declaration and N.S. Khrushchev's response letter), I simultaneously expressed the hope that the USA government show prudence and refrain from taking any actions which can lead to catastrophic consequences for peace in the whole world.

R. Kennedy, after repeating what he had already said about the President's moods (around this time he cooled down a bit and spoke in calmer tones), said that the President also values his relations with N.S. Khrushchev. As far as the future course of actions is concerned, then he, R. Kennedy, can not add anything to that which had been said by the President himself, who stressed all the seriousness of the situation and understands with what sort of dangerous consequences all this may be connected, but he can not act in any other way.

I once again set forth to him our position in the above-mentioned spirit.

Saying goodbye, already at the door of the Embassy, R. Kennedy as if by the way asked what sorts of orders the captains of the Soviet ships bound for Cuba have, in light of President Kennedy's speech yesterday and the declaration which he had just signed about the inadmissibility of bringing offensive weapons to Cuba.

I answered R. Kennedy with what I knew about the instructions which had been given earlier to the captains: not to obey any unlawful demands to stop or be searched on the open sea, as a violation of international norms of freedom of navigation. This order, as far as I know, has not been changed.

R. Kennedy, having waved his hand, said: I don't know how all this will end, for we intend to stop your ships. He left right after this.

Overall, his visit left a somewhat strange impression. He had not spoken about the future and paths toward a settlement of the conflict, making instead a "psychological" excursion, as if he was trying to justify the actions of his brother, the President, and put the responsibility for his hasty decision, in the correctness of which they and he, evidently, are not entirely confident, on us.

We think that in the interests of the affair it would be useful, using this opportunity to pass on to the President, through R. Kennedy, with whom I could meet again, in confidential form N.S. Khrushchev's thoughts on this matter, concerning not only the issues which R. Kennedy had touched on, but a wider circle of issues in light of the events which are going on now.

24.X.62 A. DOBRYNIN

[Source: AVPRF, copy courtesy of NSA; translation by Mark H. Doctoroff.]

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**Report to CPSU Central Committee From  
Department of Agitation and Propaganda,  
24 October 1962**

CC CPSU

The State Committee for Radio and Television Broadcasting of the Council of Ministers of the USSR asks permission, in light of the aggressive American actions against Cuba, to increase from October 25 of this year the amount of radio broadcasts from Moscow to Cuba up to 10 hours per day. At the present time these transmissions are conducted every day for two hours.

On questions relating to the strengthening of radio broadcasting to Cuba, the State Committee consulted with Comrade Puerta, the leader of Cuban Radio, who is now present in Moscow.

The State Committee for Radio and Television Broadcasting also reports that the USA, starting October 23 of this year, organized round-

the-clock broadcasts to Cuba—24 hours in Spanish and 12 hours in Russian.

We support the suggestion of the State Committee for Radio and Television Broadcasting of the Council of Ministers about increasing the radio transmissions from Moscow to Cuba.

It is possible to increase Soviet radio transmission to Cuba partly on the basis of a redistribution of radio transmitters, which relay programs from Moscow to foreign countries, and also by using certain radio stations, which work on the jamming of foreign radio transmissions. At the present time, one third of the entire Soviet radio transmitting capability is used to jam foreign broadcasts to the USSR. The Ministry of Communications of the USSR has no reserve radio stations.

We request agreement.

Deputy Head, Department of Agitation and Propaganda for Allied Republics, CC CPSU

(signed) (A. Egorov)

Instructor of the Department

(signed) (V. Murav'ev)

24 October 1962

*Handwritten at bottom of page:*

I report to the State Committee for Radio and Television Broadcasting (Comrade Kharlamov) Nov. 24 that from Nov. 25 the amount of radio broadcasts to Cuba will be increased.

(signed) A. Egorov

(signed) Murav'ev

[Source: F. 5, Op. 33, D. 206, L. 133, Center for the Storage of Contemporary Documentation (TsKhSD); the former CPSU CC archives, Moscow; translation by Mark H. Doctoroff.]

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**Report to CPSU Central Committee From  
Defense Minister Rodion Malinovskii  
and A. Epishev, 24 October 1962**

Secret  
Copy No. 1

CC CPSU

We report on work undertaken in connection with the announcement of the Soviet government about the aggressive actions of American imperialism against the Cuban republic.

The Ministry of Defense, fulfilling the Council of Ministers decision of 23 October 1962, has taken supplementary measures to support the

Armed Forces at the highest state of military readiness. Commanders and military councils of military regions, groups of troops, Air Defense districts and fleets are ordered to delay the discharge of soldiers, sailors and sergeants in the last year of service, troops of the strategic rocket forces, Air Defense forces, and the submarine fleet; to cancel all leaves, and to increase military readiness and vigilance in all units and on every ship.

At the present time commanders of the Armed Forces together with local party organs work on explaining to military men the Declaration of the Soviet government. In detachments, on ships, in military schools and in military institutions the Declaration of the USSR government was listened to collectively on the radio, talks, meetings and gatherings are taking place, where members of military councils, commanders and heads of political organs speak. In the country's Air Defense units, Secretaries of the Sakhalin regional CPSU committee (comrade Evstratov), the Khabarovsk provincial committee (comrade comrade Klepikov), Berezovsk City Party Committee (comrade Uglov) spoke. In the military regions special leaflets with the text of the Declaration of the Soviet government were published and transferred by air to far-away detachments and garrisons.

All servicemen passionately approve of the policies of the USSR government, support additional measures which it has undertaken and which are aimed at maintaining the troops in the state of maximum military readiness. At the same time Soviet soldiers express readiness to fulfill without delay every order of the Motherland aimed at the crushing defeat of the American aggressors.

Captain Padalko and Captain Sorkov, pilots of the Second Independent Air Defense Army, and senior technical lieutenants Aziamov and Ovcharov declared: "At this alarming hour we are at the highest state of military readiness. If the American adventurers unleash a war, they will be dealt the most powerful crippling blow. In response to the ugly provocation of the warmonger, we will strengthen even more our vigilance and military preparedness, we will fulfill without delay any order of the Soviet government."

The announcement of the Soviet Government received broad support among soldiers, sergeants and sailors due to be discharged from the Armed Forces. They all declare that they will serve as much as required in the interests of the strengthening of the preparedness of the troops.

Private Kovalenko (415th Air Force Combat Air Wing), prematurely released into the reserves, returned to his base, gave back his documents and announced, "At such a troubling time, my responsibility is to be at my military post, and to defend the interests of the Motherland with a weapon in my hands."

Many senior soldiers, striving with all their

strength and knowledge to the increase in military readiness, declare their willingness to remain for additional service. After a meeting of the 15th Division of the Moscow District Air Defense Forces 20 soldiers reported with a request to enlist for additional service. Following the example of Communists Sergeant Kaplin and Junior Sergeant Afanas'ev. 18 soldiers who had been discharged from the 345th anti-aircraft detachment of the Bakinsk District Air Defense Forces requested permission to remain in the army.

After the declaration of the Soviet government, at the bases and on the ships there was a strengthened desire of individual soldiers to defend Cuba as volunteers. On just one day in the 78th motorized infantry training division of the Ural Military District, 1240 requests to be sent to the Cuban Republic were received. At a meeting of the 300 and 302nd detachment (sic) of the Second Independent Air Defense Army of the Air Defense Forces the decision was made about the readiness of the entire unit to leave for Cuba.

In response to the directions of the Soviet government relating to the aggressive actions of the American government, military personnel heighten their vigilance and increase their personal responsibility for the maintenance of military readiness. In the 3rd Corps of the Air Defense Forces of the Moscow Military District, soldiers work at night in fulfillment of daytime norms. In the 201st anti-aircraft detachment of the Ural Military District there has been a significant reduction in the time required for maintenance work on military equipment.

As an expression of the unprecedented trust of the individuals of the Armed Forces in the CPSU there is a strengthened desire among front-line soldiers to join the ranks of the Party and the Komsomol. Following the declaration of the Government of the USSR, the number of applications to join the Party and the Komsomol grew.

During the explanation of the declaration of the Soviet Government, no sorts of negative manifestations were noted.

We are reporting for your information.

(signed) R. MALINOVSKII

(signed) A. EPISHEV

24 October 1962

[Source: F. 5, Op. 47, D. 400, Ll. 69-71, TsKhSD; translation by Mark H. Doctoroff.]

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**Telegram from the Soviet representative to the United Nations, Valerian Zorin, to the USSR MFA, 25 October 1962**

Top Secret

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#### CIPHERED TELEGRAM

On 25 October in the Security Council, Stevenson, speaking first, read out Kennedy's answer to U Thant's appeal, in which Kennedy welcomes U Thant's initiative and directs Stevenson quickly to consider with U Thant the issue of conducting negotiations towards a settlement to the situation which has been created in the Caribbean Sea region /the text of Kennedy's response was transmitted via teletype/.

From our side we made public Comr. N.S. Khrushchev's response to U Thant on his appeal, which was transmitted to U Thant before the opening of the session.

During the meeting and after it, representatives of many African and Asian countries approached us, noting the exceedingly important significance for the preservation of peace in the Caribbean Sea region and in the whole world of the message from the head of the Soviet government.

Stevenson's speech at today's session, regardless of his attempts to assert once again that Cuba has at its disposal an offensive weapon, and that this creates a danger for the Western hemisphere, had in essence a defensive character. He made a declaration as if the USA had not sought a pretext to raise the Cuban issue, that the USA did not object to deliveries to Cuba of a defensive weapon, and that everything which they are trying so hard to do is to implement "limited" actions. Being in no position to disprove our accusations of a violation by the USA of the UN Charter, Stevenson declared that the USA could not slow down implementation of the planned measures in expectation of a Soviet veto in the Security Council. He said further that the USA had come to the Security Council even before the Organization of the American States had started to work and had given its approval for the "quarantine" measures. Stevenson tried to present the matter as if he was talking not about unilateral measures of the USA, but about the agreed actions of the Organization of American States.

In our speech we showed the lack of foundation of all of these assertions by Stevenson, stressing that, as the discussion in the Security Council had confirmed, the USA had no sort of justifications for the aggressive actions which it had undertaken, which had created a threat of thermonuclear war. We pointed out that the aggressive path down which the USA had set had met a rebuff from the side of the peoples and the majority of UN members. Precisely this has now prompted the USA to give its agreement to enter into negotiations. We ridiculed the maneuver which Stevenson had made at the session in showing the photographs which had been fabricated by American intelligence which had been assigned the role

of "irrefutable" evidence of the presence in Cuba of nuclear-missile arms. We classified this maneuver as an attempt to deflect the Security Council away from the essence of the case, particularly from the aggressive actions of the USA, which had violated the UN Charter and which had created a threat to peace.

In response to Stevenson's attempts to pose to us questions about whether we are placing nuclear weapons in Cuba we referred to the corresponding situation in the TASS announcement of 11 September /the texts of our speeches were transmitted by teletype/.

The attempts of the USA representative to turn the Council into a tribune for base propaganda met no support from other members of the Council.

The representative of the UAR, [Gen. Mahmoud] Riad, and the representative of Ghana, [Alex] Quaison-Sackey, noted the important significance of U Thant's appeal and the responses of Comrade N.S. Khrushchev and Kennedy, stressing that as a result of that exchange of messages a new situation had been created in the Council. Riad and Quaison-Sackey proposed suspending the session so as to allow all the interested sides, with the participation of U Thant, to conduct the necessary negotiations, having in mind that the Council sessions will be resumed depending on the result and process of the negotiations.

That proposal was supported by the Chilean representative, [Daniel] Schweitzer.

The proposal of the UAR and Ghana was accepted without objections by the Security Council. When the adopted decision was announced, I, as the Chairman of the Council, stressed that the Security Council could be convened by the Chairman of the Council depending on the course of the negotiations. In this way, no votes were taken on any of the proposed resolutions /ours, the American proposal, and the neutral one/, and they remained in the Security Council file.

We received your <sup>x/</sup> [word deleted—ed.] after it had already basically been decided that in relation to the start of negotiations between the interested sides consideration of the issue in the Security Council is not ending, and that the issue remains on the Security Council agenda, moreover, the Council sessions may be resume at any time depending on the course of the negotiations between the interested sides. At the present time, as we understand it, it would be premature to raise the issue at the XVIIth session of the General Assembly, insofar as the issue as before is on the Security Council agenda and we will always have the possibility to demand that it be raised in the Assembly if the possible new consideration by the Security Council will end without result.

After the session U Thant informed us that he intends to begin negotiations with us, the Cubans, and the Americans tomorrow, 26 October. He will meet with each delegation individu-

ally. We will report our thoughts about this meeting in supplementary fashion.

25.X.62 V. ZORIN

x/ Having in mind "Your telegram"

[Source: AVP RF, copy courtesy of NSA; translation by Mark H. Doctoroff.]

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**Telegram from Soviet Ambassador to the  
USA Dobrynin to the USSR MFA,  
27 October 1962**

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CIPHERED TELEGRAM

During the entire day of 26 October in broadcasts of American radio, television, and in press reports, in accord with instructions from above, it is being ever more firmly asserted that in Cuba the construction of missile bases is being continued under a forced tempo, and that the missiles themselves are being brought to operational readiness.

Toward the end of the day, the State Department representative White and the Secretary to the President for questions of the press, [Pierre] Salinger, made official declarations about that. /

An analogous declaration was made in the name of the Organization of American States, which, evidently, is aimed at giving that fact extra "legal force". In their declarations there is made a pretty clear hint to the effect that the mentioned "fact" gives the USA government "a foundation" to take further, more serious measures against Cuba.

At the same time, among journalists who are close to the White House, State Department and Pentagon conversations about the possibility of implementing at the earliest possible time a mass overflight of American aviation in the area where the missile platforms are deployed, with a possible commando raid, have received wide circulation. Several of them in this regard express the opinion that an ultimatum to the Cuban government itself to disassemble the missile platforms in a very short time might precede such an overflight. As before, the real possibility of an imminent incursion in Cuba is being asserted, but the theme of a bombardment of the missile bases has now moved to the fore.

The wide circulation and the certain orientation of similar conversations under conditions when, practically speaking, censorship has been introduced on reports concerning Cuba, and when constant instruction of journalists is going on, leads to the thought that these conversations are inspired by the government itself.

Facilitating the circulation of these types of moods and rumors, the USA government, evidently, is trying to show its determination to achieve at any price the liquidation of the missile emplacements in Cuba with the aim of putting on that issue the maximum pressure on us and on Cuba.

At the same time it is not possible to exclude that the general American plan of actions really may include the implementation of such an overflight, especially if the adventurist moods of certain members of the circle which is close to the President are taken into account. In this regard we should note that judging by certain information, disagreements about participation in the negotiations in the UN are now growing in the USA government, since this is connected with dragging out the time and a weakening of the acuteness of the moment, and means that the difficulty of taking "decisive measures" against Cuba unavoidably would grow.

27.X.62 A. DOBRYNIN

[Source: AVP RF, copy courtesy of NSA; translation by Mark H. Doctoroff]

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**For Dobrynin's 27 October 1962 Cable  
of His Meeting with Robert F. Kennedy,  
see accompanying box**

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**Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko's  
Instructions to the USSR Ambassador to the  
USA, 28 October 1962**

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CIPHERED TELEGRAM

## ANATOMY OF A CONTROVERSY:

### **Anatoly F. Dobrynin's Meeting With Robert F. Kennedy, Saturday, 27 October 1962**

by Jim Hershberg

If the Cuban Missile Crisis was the most dangerous passage of the Cold War, the most dangerous moment of the Cuban Missile Crisis was the evening of Saturday, 27 October 1962, when the resolution of the crisis—war or peace—appeared to hang in the balance. While Soviet ships had not attempted to break the U.S. naval blockade of Cuba, Soviet nuclear missile bases remained on the island and were rapidly becoming operational, and pressure on President Kennedy to order an air strike or invasion was mounting, especially after an American U-2 reconnaissance plane was shot down over Cuba that Saturday afternoon and its pilot killed. Hopes that a satisfactory resolution to the crisis could be reached between Washington and Moscow had dimmed, moreover, when a letter from Soviet

leader Nikita S. Khrushchev arrived Saturday morning demanding that the United States agree to remove its Jupiter missiles from Turkey in exchange for a Soviet removal of missiles from Cuba. The letter struck U.S. officials as an ominous hardening of the Soviet position from the previous day's letter from Khrushchev, which had omitted any mention of American missiles in Turkey but had instead implied that Washington's pledge not to invade Cuba would be sufficient to obviate the need for Soviet nuclear protection of Castro's revolution.

On Saturday evening, after a day of tense discussions within the "ExComm" or Executive Committee of senior advisers, President Kennedy decided on a dual strategy—a formal letter to Khrushchev accepting the implicit terms of his October 26 letter (a U.S. non-invasion pledge in exchange for the verifiable departure of Soviet nuclear missiles), coupled with private assurances to Khrushchev that the United States would speedily take out its missiles from Turkey, but only on the basis of a secret understanding, not as an open agreement that would appear to the public, and to NATO allies, as a concession to

blackmail. The U.S. president elected to transmit this sensitive message through his brother, Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, who met in his office at the Justice Department with Soviet ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin.

That meeting has long been recognized as a turning point in the crisis, but several aspects of it have been shrouded in mystery and confusion. One concerned the issue of the Jupiter missiles in Turkey: U.S. officials maintained that neither John nor Robert Kennedy promised to withdraw the Jupiters as a quid pro quo, or concession, in exchange for the removal of the Soviet missiles from Cuba, or as part of an explicit agreement, deal, or pledge, but had merely informed Dobrynin that Kennedy had planned to take out the American missiles in any event. This was the version of events depicted in the first published account of the RFK-Dobrynin meeting by one of the participants, in Robert F. Kennedy's *Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis*, posthumously published in 1969, a year after he was assassinated while seeking the Democratic nomination for president. While *Thirteen Days* depicted RFK as rejecting any firm agreement to

*continued on page 77*

## EXTRAORDINARY

## WASHINGTON

## SOVIET AMBASSADOR

Quickly get in touch with R. Kennedy and tell him that you passed on to N.S. Khrushchev the contents of your conversation with him. N.S. Khrushchev sent the following urgent response.

The thoughts which R. Kennedy expressed at the instruction of the President finds understanding in Moscow. Today, an answer will be given by radio to the President's message of October 27, and that response will be the most favorable. The main thing which disturbs the President, precisely the issue of the dismantling under international control of the rocket bases in Cuba—meets no objection and will be explained in detail in N.S. Khrushchev's message.

Telegraph upon implementation.

[handwritten]  
(A. Gromyko)

[Source: AVP RF, copy courtesy of NSA; translation by Mark H. Doctoroff]

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**Telegram from Soviet Ambassador to the  
USA Dobrynin to USSR MFA,  
28 October 1962**

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## CIPHERED TELEGRAM

R. Kennedy, with whom I met, listened very attentively to N.S. Khrushchev's response. Expressing thanks for the report, he said that he would quickly return to the White House in order to inform the President about the "important response" of the head of the Soviet government. "This is a great relief," R. Kennedy added further, and it was evident that he expressed his words somehow involuntarily. "I," said R. Kennedy, "today will finally be able to see my kids, for I have been entirely absent from home."

According to everything it was evident that R. Kennedy with satisfaction, it is necessary to say, really with great relief met the report about N.S. Khrushchev's response.

In parting, R. Kennedy once again requested that strict secrecy be maintained about the agreement with Turkey. "Especially so that the correspondents don't find out. At our place for the time being even Salinger does not know about it" (It was not entirely clear why he considered it

necessary to mention his name, but he did it).

I responded that in the Embassy no one besides me knows about the conversation with him yesterday. R. Kennedy said that in addition to the current correspondence and future exchange of opinions via diplomatic channels, on important questions he will maintain contact with me directly, avoiding any intermediaries.

Before departing, R. Kennedy once again gave thanks for N.S. Khrushchev's quick and effective response.

Your instructions arrived here 1.5 hours after the announcement via radio about the essence of N.S. Khrushchev's response. I explained to R. Kennedy that the tardiness was caused by a delay of telegrams at the telegraph station.

28.X.62 A. DOBRYNIN

[Source: AVP RF, copy courtesy of NSA; translation by Mark H. Doctoroff.]

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**Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko's  
Instructions to the USSR representative at  
the United Nations, 28 October 1962**

In relation to the information which you received about U Thant's conversations with the Cuban representative [Garcia] Inchaustegi, you must be guided by the following:

First. You must declare to U Thant that orders have been given to the Soviet officers in Cuba to take down the emplacements which the Americans characterize as offensive weapons. Declare also that by itself, it goes without saying that any type of work related to the creation of such emplacements has already ceased.

Second. Also inform U Thant about the Soviet government's agreement to his proposal that representatives of the International Red Cross be allowed to visit the Soviet ships bound for Cuba in order to confirm that on them there are none of the types of weapons about which the President and government of the USA show concern, calling them offensive weapons. In this regard it is intended that the stated representatives will be conveyed to both Soviet ships and to the ships of neutral countries. You must inform U Thant, for his personal information, that on those Soviet ships which at the present time are bound for Cuba, there are no weapons at all.

Stress that the Soviet government has taken all these steps so as not to step on the negotiations, which have begun on U Thant's initiative, between him and the representatives of the USSR, USA, and Cuba, aimed at liquidating the dangerous situation which has developed.

As far as the issue of the possibility of U Thant's journey to Cuba with a group of aides and experts is concerned, it goes without saying that

the answer should be given by the Government of Cuba.

Tell U Thant that in our opinion, his journey to Cuba with a group of accompanying officials would have a positive significance.

Telegraph upon implementation.

[handwritten]

28. X [illegible initials, presumably  
Gromyko's]

[Source: AVP RF, copy courtesy of NSA; translation by Mark H. Doctoroff.]

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**Coded telegram from Soviet official Georgy  
Zhukov, 1 November 1962**

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## CIPHERED TELEGRAM

I am reporting about a meeting with [White House press secretary Pierre] Salinger on 31 October.

I. Salinger requested that I pass on to N.S. Khrushchev that Kennedy is thankful to him for the decision which he made to dismantle and remove the missiles, and expresses his confidence that the agreement which was reached, built on mutual trust, will open the way to the resolution of other ripe problems. "The President does not want to portray the matter as if we won a victory over the USSR," said Salinger. His version for the press is exactly reflected in [New York Times correspondent James] Reston's article of 29 October. Kennedy declared to the members of the government that it makes no sense to try to use the situation that developed to Khrushchev's detriment. In this spirit, Rusk conducted talks with 50 of the most prominent and trusted observers in the USA and allied countries.

2. Kennedy, in Salinger's words, is now extremely preoccupied with somehow disarming his adversaries, who are asserting that he has once again "fallen into a trap..." "We must, he said, no matter what, publish evidence that the missiles have been dismantled and taken away. Let it be representatives of the UN or of the Red Cross, let it be observation photos taken from the air, it is all the same to us. In this regard we are not demanding access to the missiles themselves, they really are secret. We must publish evidence that they are no longer on the launching pads and that they have been taken away.

3. Kennedy, in Salinger's words, as in the past is under strong pressure from the "right-wingers," who are condemning him for the fact that he, for the first time in the history of the

Western hemisphere has given a guarantee for the permanent preservation of a "Communist preserve" by the shores of the USA. In order to deflect these attacks, Kennedy must receive evidence to the effect that Castro has no "offensive" weapons.

4. Kennedy, as Salinger asserts, believes that achieving a resolution to the Cuban crisis "will open a completely new epoch in Soviet-American relations." when mutual trust will become the "basis of everything." One of the first issues to be resolved can and must be the issue of a test ban.

5. Regarding a meeting between Kennedy and Khrushchev, before the Cuban crisis a majority of members of the government spoke out against such a contact, although it had been publicly stated that Kennedy will meet with Khrushchev if he comes to the General Assembly. Kennedy himself had doubted that this meeting will bring any sort of positive results.

"Now, - said Salinger - the situation has changed. The Cuban crisis showed that the issues on which the improvement of Soviet-American relations depends must be resolved urgently. Therefore, it is will be necessary to review the position in relation to a meeting in light of the results of the settlement of the crisis. We were too close to war for it to be possible to forget about this and to allow ourselves to delay even longer in reaching a resolution to the problems which have become urgent. However, the President still does not have a prepared decision about the expediency of a meeting and about the issues which should be considered. We still have to think about that."

6. Salinger, like other interlocutors in Washington, avoided touching on the German question. He mentioned in passing only that "even in respect to Berlin we have always stressed our respect for the opposing point of view."

7. Salinger stressed that even with all the "shortcomings" of Kennedy and Khrushchev's Vienna meeting, it had given a positive result, at least insofar as on the basis of the agreement that had been achieved there the Laos problem had been settled, which prompted confidence that it is possible to develop our relations on the basis of trust. For precisely this reason Kennedy had withdrawn the forces from Thailand.

"The Cuban crisis undermined this development of relations, but Khrushchev's wise decision may put the development of Soviet-American relations onto a basis of mutual trust," said Salinger.

8. Salinger asked me to pass on to N.S. Khrushchev his personal thanks for the hospitality which had been given to him in Moscow.

XII.62 G. ZHUKOV

[Source: AVPRF, copy courtesy of NSA; translation by Mark H. Doctoroff.]

### NEW RUSSIAN LAW AND THE ARCHIVAL SITUATION

On 25 January 1995 the Russian parliament passed a "Federal Law on Information, Information Systems, and the Protection of Information." It was signed into law by Russian President Boris Yeltsin on 20 February 1995 and was published in *Sobranie Zakonodatel'stva Rossiiskoi Federatsii* 8 (20 February 1995), pp. 1213-1225.

The lengthy, 25-article law covers a wide range of topics, and much of it has no direct bearing on the archives. In a few places, however, especially Article 13 ("Guarantees of the Provision of Information"), the law does have a direct--and, unfortunately, highly negative--bearing on the archives. Points 1 and 2 of Article 13, which entitle "organs of state authority" to restrict access to "information resources pertaining to the activities of these organs," effectively leave the individual state ministries and agencies with full discretion over their own archives.

This provision may be consistent with legislation passed in the spring of 1994, but it runs counter to suggestions that the archival holdings of the various ministries and state agencies be gradually transferred to the auspices of the State Archival Service of Russia (Rosarkhiv). It also seems to run counter to the decree that Yeltsin issued last September, which was published in the previous issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin* (Fall 1994, pp. 89, 100).

It is difficult to say how strictly the law will be enforced, but it seems to be one further indication that the proponents of archival openness are losing ground, at least for now.

--Mark Kramer

### CONTROVERSY

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withdraw the Jupiters, this was also the first *public* indication that the issue had even been privately discussed.

With Dobrynin obviously unable to publish his own version—he remained Moscow's ambassador in Washington until 1986, and Soviet diplomats were not in the habit of publishing tell-all exposés prior to glasnost—the first important Soviet account of the event to emerge was contained in the tape-recorded memoirs of deposed Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev, which were smuggled to the West and published in 1970 (after Khrushchev's death, additional installments saw print in the West in 1974 and 1990). The account of the RFK-Dobrynin meeting in *Khrushchev Remembers*, in the form of a paraphrase from memory of Dobrynin's report, did not directly touch upon the secret discussions concerning the Jupiters, but did raise eyebrows with its claim that Robert F. Kennedy had fretted to Dobrynin that if his brother did not approve an attack on Cuba soon, the American military might "overthrow him and seize power." The second volume of Khrushchev's memoirs (*Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament*), published posthumously in 1974, touched only briefly on the Robert Kennedy-Dobrynin meeting, but included the flat statement (on p. 512) that "President Kennedy said that in exchange for the withdrawal of our missiles, he would remove American missiles from Turkey and Italy," although he described this "pledge" as "symbolic" since the rockets "were already obsolete."

Over the years, many scholars of the Cuban Missile Crisis came strongly to suspect that Robert Kennedy had, in fact, relayed a pledge from his brother to take out the Jupiters from Turkey in exchange for the Soviet removal of nuclear missiles from Cuba, so long as Moscow kept the swap secret; yet senior former Kennedy Administration officials, such as then-National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy and then-Secretary of State Dean Rusk, continued to insist that RFK had passed on no more than an informal assurance rather than an explicit promise or agreement.

The first authoritative admission on the U.S. side that the Jupiters had actually been part of a "deal" came at a conference in Moscow in January 1989, after glasnost had led Soviet (and then Cuban) former officials to participate in international scholarly efforts to reconstruct and assess the history of the crisis. At that meeting, former Kennedy speechwriter Theodore Sorensen (and the uncredited editor of *Thirteen Days*) admitted, after prodding from Dobrynin, that he had taken it upon himself to edit out a "very explicit" reference to the inclusion of the Jupiters in the final deal to settle the crisis.

Now Dobrynin's original, contemporaneous, and dramatic cable of the meeting, alluded to



in some accounts by Soviets (such as Anatoly Gromyko, son of the late foreign minister) with special access, has been declassified and is available at the archives of the Russian Foreign Ministry. It is reprinted in translation below, along with relevant excerpts from the other publications mentioned above. The Dobrynin cable's first publication in English, a copy obtained by the Japanese television network NHK, came last year in an appendix to *We All Lost the Cold War*, a study by Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Stein, whose commentary is also excerpted.

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#### Robert F. Kennedy's (edited) Description

I telephoned Ambassador Dobrynin about 7:15 P.M. and asked him to come to the Department of Justice. We met in my office at 7:45. I told him first that we knew that work was continuing on the missile bases in Cuba and that in the last few days it had been expedited. I said that in the last few hours we had learned that our reconnaissance planes flying over Cuba had been fired upon and that one of our U-2s had been shot down and the pilot killed. That for us was a most serious turn of events.

President Kennedy did not want a military conflict. He had done everything possible to avoid a military engagement with Cuba and with the Soviet Union, but now they had forced our hand. Because of the deception of the Soviet Union, our photographic reconnaissance planes would have to continue to fly over Cuba, and if the Cubans or Soviets shot at these planes, then we would have to shoot back. This would inevitably lead to further incidents and to escalation of the conflict, the implications of which were very grave indeed.

He said the Cubans resented the fact that we were violating Cuban air space. I replied that if we had not violated Cuban air space, we would still be believing what Khrushchev had said—that there would be no missiles placed in Cuba. In any case, I said, this matter was far more serious than the air space of Cuba—it involved the peoples of both of our countries and, in fact, people all over the globe.

The Soviet Union had secretly established missile bases in Cuba while at the same time proclaiming privately and publicly that this would never be done. We had to have a commitment by tomorrow that those bases would be removed. I was not giving them an ultimatum but a statement of fact. He should understand that if they did not remove those bases, we would remove them. President Kennedy had great respect for the Ambassador's country and the courage of its people. Perhaps his country might feel it necessary to take retaliatory action; but before that was over, there would be not only dead Americans but dead Russians as well.

He asked me what offer the United States was making, and I told him of the letter that President Kennedy had just transmitted to Khrushchev. He raised the question of our removing the missiles from Turkey. I said that there could be no quid pro quo or any arrangement made under this kind of threat or pressure, and that in the last analysis this was a decision that would have to be made by NATO. However, I said, President Kennedy had been anxious to remove those missiles from Italy and Turkey for a long period of time. He had ordered their removal some time ago, and it was our judgment that, within a short time after this crisis was over, those missiles would be gone.

I said President Kennedy wished to have peaceful relations between our two countries. He wished to resolve the problems that confronted us in Europe and Southeast Asia. He wished to move forward on the control of nuclear weapons. However, we could make progress on these matters only when the crisis was behind us. Time was running out. We had only a few more hours—we needed an answer immediately from the Soviet Union. I said we must have it the next day.

I returned to the White House....

[Robert F. Kennedy, *Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: New American Library, 1969), 107-109.]

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#### Khrushchev's Description

The climax came after five or six days, when our ambassador to Washington, Anatoly Dobrynin, reported that the President's brother, Robert Kennedy, had come to see him on an unofficial visit. Dobrynin's report went something like this:

"Robert Kennedy looked exhausted. One could see from his eyes that he had not slept for days. He himself said that he had not been home for six days and nights. 'The President is in a grave situation,' Robert Kennedy said, 'and does not know how to get out of it. We are under very severe stress. In fact we are under pressure from our military to use force against Cuba. Probably at this very moment the President is sitting down to write a message to Chairman Khrushchev. We want to ask you, Mr. Dobrynin, to pass President Kennedy's message to Chairman Khrushchev through unofficial channels. President Kennedy implores Chairman Khrushchev to accept his offer and to take into consideration the peculiarities of the American system. Even though the President himself is very much against starting a war over Cuba, an irreversible chain of events could occur against his will. That is why the President is appealing directly to Chairman Khrushchev for his help in liquidating this conflict. If the situation continues much longer, the President is not sure that the military will not overthrow him and seize

power. The American army could get out of control.'"

[*Khrushchev Remembers*, intro., commentary, and notes by Edward Crankshaw, trans. and ed. by Strobe Talbott (Boston: Little, Brown, 1970; citation from paperback edition, New York: Bantam, 1971), pp. 551-52]

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#### Sorensen's "Confession":

...the president [Kennedy] recognized that, for Chairman Khrushchev to withdraw the missiles from Cuba, it would be undoubtedly helpful to him if he could say at the same time to his colleagues on the Presidium, "And we have been assured that the missiles will be coming out of Turkey." And so, after the ExComm meeting [on the evening of 27 October 1962], as I'm sure almost all of you know, a small group met in President Kennedy's office, and he instructed Robert Kennedy—at the suggestion of Secretary of State [Dean] Rusk—to deliver the letter to Ambassador Dobrynin for referral to Chairman Khrushchev, but to add orally what was not in the letter: that the missiles would come out of Turkey.

Ambassador Dobrynin felt that Robert Kennedy's book did not adequately express that the "deal" on the Turkish missiles was part of the resolution of the crisis. And here I have a confession to make to my colleagues on the American side, as well as to others who are present. I was the editor of Robert Kennedy's book. It was, in fact, a diary of those thirteen days. And his diary was very explicit that this was part of the deal; but at that time it was still a secret even on the American side, except for the six of us who had been present at that meeting. So I took it upon myself to edit that out of his diaries, and that is why the Ambassador is somewhat justified in saying that the diaries are not as explicit as his conversation.

[Sorensen comments, in Bruce J. Allyn, James G. Blight, and David A. Welch, eds., *Back to the Brink: Proceedings of the Moscow Conference on the Cuban Missile Crisis, January 27-28, 1989* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1992), pp. 92-93]

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#### Accounts of Former U.S. Officials:

##### McGeorge Bundy:

... Later [on Saturday], accepting a proposal from Dean Rusk, [John F.] Kennedy instructed his brother to tell Ambassador Dobrynin that while

there could be no bargain over the missiles that had been supplied to Turkey, the president himself was determined to have them removed and would attend to the matter once the present crisis was resolved—as long as no one in Moscow called that action part of a bargain. [p. 406]

...The other part of the oral message [to Dobrynin] was proposed by Dean Rusk; that we should tell Khrushchev that while there could be no deal over the Turkish missiles, the president was determined to get them out and would do so once the Cuban crisis was resolved. The proposal was quickly supported by the rest of us [in addition to Bundy and Rusk, those present included President Kennedy, McNamara, RFK, George Ball, Roswell Gilpatrick, Llewellyn Thompson, and Theodore Sorensen]. Concerned as we all were by the cost of a public bargain struck under pressure at the apparent expense of the Turks, and aware as we were from the day's discussion that for some, even in our own closest councils, even this unilateral private assurance might appear to betray an ally, we agreed without hesitation that no one not in the room was to be informed of this additional message. Robert Kennedy was instructed to make it plain to Dobrynin that the same secrecy must be observed on the other side, and that any Soviet reference to our assurance would simply make it null and void. [pp. 432-44]

...There was no leak. As far as I know, none of the nine of us told anyone else what had happened. We denied in every forum that there was any deal, and in the narrowest sense what we said was usually true, as far as it went. When the orders were passed that the Jupiters must come out, we gave the plausible and accurate—if incomplete—explanation that the missile crisis had convinced the president once and for all that he did not want those missiles there.... [p. 434]

[from McGeorge Bundy, *Danger and Survival: Choices About the Bomb in the First Fifty Years* (New York: Random House, 1988)]

#### Dean Rusk:

Even though Soviet ships had turned around, time was running out. We made this very clear to Khrushchev. Earlier in the week Bobby Kennedy told Ambassador Dobrynin that if the missile were not withdrawn immediately, the crisis would move into a different and dangerous military phase. In his book *Khrushchev Remembers*, Khrushchev states that Robert Kennedy told Dobrynin that the military might take over. Khrushchev either genuinely misunderstood or deliberately misused Bobby's statement. Obviously there was never any threat of a military takeover in this country. We wondered about Khrushchev's situation, even whether some Soviet general or member of the Politburo would put

a pistol to Khrushchev's head and say, "Mr. Chairman, launch those missiles or we'll blow your head off!"

...In framing a response [to Khrushchev's second letter of Saturday, October 27], the president, Bundy, McNamara, Bobby Kennedy, and I met in the Oval Office, where after some discussion I suggested that since the Jupiters in Turkey were coming out in any event, we should inform the Russians of this so that this irrelevant question would not complicate the solution of the missile sites in Cuba. We agreed that Bobby should inform Ambassador Dobrynin orally. Shortly after we returned to our offices, I telephoned Bobby to underline that he should pass this along to Dobrynin only as information, not a public pledge. Bobby told me that he was then sitting with Dobrynin and had already talked with him. Bobby later told me that Dobrynin called this message "very important information."

[Dean Rusk as told to Richard Rusk, *As I Saw It* (New York: Norton & Co., 1990), pp. 238-240]

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#### Dobrynin's Cable to the Soviet Foreign Ministry, 27 October 1962:

TOP SECRET  
Making Copies Prohibited  
Copy No. 1

#### CIPHERED TELEGRAM

Late tonight R. Kennedy invited me to come see him. We talked alone.

The Cuban crisis, R. Kennedy began, continues to quickly worsen. We have just received a report that an unarmed American plane was shot down while carrying out a reconnaissance flight over Cuba. The military is demanding that the President arm such planes and respond to fire with fire. The USA government will have to do this.

I interrupted R. Kennedy and asked him, what right American planes had to fly over Cuba at all, crudely violating its sovereignty and accepted international norms? How would the USA have reacted if foreign planes appeared over its territory?

"We have a resolution of the Organization of American states that gives us the right to such overflights," R. Kennedy quickly replied.

I told him that the Soviet Union, like all peace-loving countries, resolutely rejects such a "right" or, to be more exact, this kind of true lawlessness, when people who don't like the social-political situation in a country try to impose their will on it—a small state where the

people themselves established and maintained [their system]. "The OAS resolution is a direct violation of the UN Charter," I added, "and you, as the Attorney General of the USA, the highest American legal entity, should certainly know that."

R. Kennedy said that he realized that we had different approaches to these problems and it was not likely that we could convince each other. But now the matter is not in these differences, since time is of the essence. "I want," R. Kennedy stressed, "to lay out the current alarming situation the way the president sees it. He wants N.S. Khrushchev to know this. This is the thrust of the situation now."

"Because of the plane that was shot down, there is now strong pressure on the president to give an order to respond with fire if fired upon when American reconnaissance planes are flying over Cuba. The USA can't stop these flights, because this is the only way we can quickly get information about the state of construction of the missile bases in Cuba, which we believe pose a very serious threat to our national security. But if we start to fire in response—a chain reaction will quickly start that will be very hard to stop. The same thing in regard to the essence of the issue of the missile bases in Cuba. The USA government is determined to get rid of those bases—up to, in the extreme case, of bombing them, since, I repeat, they pose a great threat to the security of the USA. But in response to the bombing of these bases, in the course of which Soviet specialists might suffer, the Soviet government will undoubtedly respond with the same against us, somewhere in Europe. A real war will begin, in which millions of Americans and Russians will die. We want to avoid that any way we can, I'm sure that the government of the USSR has the same wish. However, taking time to find a way out [of the situation] is very risky (here R. Kennedy mentioned as if in passing that there are many unreasonable heads among the generals, and not only among the generals, who are 'itching for a fight'). The situation might get out of control, with irreversible consequences."

"In this regard," R. Kennedy said, "the president considers that a suitable basis for regulating the entire Cuban conflict might be the letter N.S. Khrushchev sent on October 26 and the letter in response from the President, which was sent off today to N.S. Khrushchev through the US Embassy in Moscow. The most important thing for us," R. Kennedy stressed, "is to get as soon as possible the agreement of the Soviet government to halt further work on the construction of the missile bases in Cuba and take measures under international control that would make it impossible to use these weapons. In exchange the government of the USA is ready, in addition to repealing all measures on the 'quarantine,' to give the assurances that there will not be any invasion of Cuba and that other countries of the

Western Hemisphere are ready to give the same assurances—the US government is certain of this.”

“And what about Turkey?” I asked R. Kennedy.

“If that is the only obstacle to achieving the regulation I mentioned earlier, then the president doesn’t see any unsurmountable difficulties in resolving this issue,” replied R. Kennedy. “The greatest difficulty for the president is the public discussion of the issue of Turkey. Formally the deployment of missile bases in Turkey was done by a special decision of the NATO Council. To announce now a unilateral decision by the president of the USA to withdraw missile bases from Turkey—this would damage the entire structure of NATO and the US position as the leader of NATO, where, as the Soviet government knows very well, there are many arguments. In short, if such a decision were announced now it would seriously tear apart NATO.”

“However, President Kennedy is ready to come to agree on that question with N.S. Khrushchev, too. I think that in order to withdraw these bases from Turkey,” R. Kennedy said, “we need 4-5 months. This is the minimal amount of time necessary for the US government to do this, taking into account the procedures that exist within the NATO framework. On the whole Turkey issue,” R. Kennedy added, “if Premier N.S. Khrushchev agrees with what I’ve said, we can continue to exchange opinions between him and the president, using him, R. Kennedy and the Soviet ambassador. “However, the president can’t say anything public in this regard about Turkey,” R. Kennedy said again. R. Kennedy then warned that his comments about Turkey are extremely confidential; besides him and his brother, only 2-3 people know about it in Washington.

“That’s all that he asked me to pass on to N.S. Khrushchev,” R. Kennedy said in conclusion. “The president also asked N.S. Khrushchev to give him an answer (through the Soviet ambassador and R. Kennedy) if possible within the next day (Sunday) on these thoughts in order to have a business-like, clear answer in principle. [He asked him] not to get into a wordy discussion, which might drag things out. The current serious situation, unfortunately, is such that there is very little time to resolve this whole issue. Unfortunately, events are developing too quickly. The request for a reply tomorrow,” stressed R. Kennedy, “is just that—a request, and not an ultimatum. The president hopes that the head of the Soviet government will understand him correctly.”

I noted that it went without saying that the Soviet government would not accept any ultimatums and it was good that the American government realized that. I also reminded him of N.S. Khrushchev’s appeal in his last letter to the president to demonstrate state wisdom in resolv-

ing this question. Then I told R. Kennedy that the president’s thoughts would be brought to the attention of the head of the Soviet government. I also said that I would contact him as soon as there was a reply. In this regard, R. Kennedy gave me a number of a direct telephone line to the White House.

In the course of the conversation, R. Kennedy noted that he knew about the conversation that television commentator Scali had yesterday with an Embassy adviser on possible ways to regulate the Cuban conflict [one-and-a-half lines whited out]

I should say that during our meeting R. Kennedy was very upset; in any case, I’ve never seen him like this before. True, about twice he tried to return to the topic of “deception,” (that he talked about so persistently during our previous meeting), but he did so in passing and without any edge to it. He didn’t even try to get into fights on various subjects, as he usually does, and only persistently returned to one topic: time is of the essence and we shouldn’t miss the chance.

After meeting with me he immediately went to see the president, with whom, as R. Kennedy said, he spends almost all his time now.

27/X-62 A. DOBRYNIN

[Source: *Russian Foreign Ministry archives, translation from copy provided by NHK, in Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, We All Lost the Cold War (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), appendix, pp. 523-526, with minor revisions.*]

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**Lebow and Stein comment,  
We All Lost the Cold War (excerpt):**

The cable testifies to the concern of John and Robert Kennedy that military action would trigger runaway escalation. Robert Kennedy told Dobrynin of his government’s determination to ensure the removal of the Soviet missiles in Cuba, and his belief that the Soviet Union “will undoubtedly respond with the same against us, somewhere in Europe.” Such an admission seems illogical if the administration was using the threat of force to compel the Soviet Union to withdraw its missiles from Cuba. It significantly raised the expected cost to the United States of an attack against the missiles, thereby weakening the credibility of the American threat. To maintain or enhance that credibility, Kennedy would have had to discount the probability of Soviet retaliation to Dobrynin. That nobody in the government was certain of Khrushchev’s response makes Kennedy’s statement all the more remarkable.

It is possible that Dobrynin misquoted Robert Kennedy. However, the Soviet ambassador was a careful and responsible diplomat. At the

very least, Kennedy suggested that he thought that Soviet retaliation was likely. Such an admission was still damaging to compellence. It seems likely that Kennedy was trying to establish the basis for a more cooperative approach to crisis resolution. His brother, he made clear, was under enormous pressure from a coterie of generals and civilian officials who were “itching for a fight.” This also was a remarkable admission for the attorney general to make. The pressure on the president to attack Cuba, as Kennedy explained at the beginning of the meeting, had been greatly intensified by the destruction of an unarmed American reconnaissance plane. The president did not want to use force, in part because he recognized the terrible consequences of escalation, and was therefore requesting Soviet assistance to make it unnecessary.

This interpretation is supported by the president’s willingness to remove the Jupiter missiles as a *quid pro quo* for the withdrawal of missiles in Cuba, and his brother’s frank confession that the only obstacle to dismantling the Jupiters were political. “Public discussion” of a missile exchange would damage the United States’ position in NATO. For this reason, Kennedy revealed, “besides himself and his brother, only 2-3 people know about it in Washington.” Khrushchev would have to cooperate with the administration to keep the American concession a secret.

Most extraordinary of all is the apparent agreement between Dobrynin and Kennedy to treat Kennedy’s de facto ultimatum as “a request, and not an ultimatum.” This was a deliberate attempt to defuse as much as possible the hostility that Kennedy’s request for an answer by the next day was likely to provoke in Moscow. So too was Dobrynin’s next sentence: “I noted that it went without saying that the Soviet government would not accept any ultimatum and it was good that the American government realized that.”

Prior meetings between Dobrynin and Kennedy had sometimes degenerated into shouting matches. On this occasion, Dobrynin indicates, the attorney general kept his emotions in check and took the ambassador into his confidence in an attempt to cooperate on the resolution of the crisis. This two-pronged strategy succeeded where compellence alone might have failed. It gave Khrushchev positive incentives to remove the Soviet missiles and reduced the emotional cost to him of the withdrawal. He responded as Kennedy and Dobrynin had hoped.