

*Also by Richard J. Walton*

The Remnants of Power: The Tragic Last Years of Adlai Stevenson  
America and the Cold War  
Beyond Diplomacy  
The United States and Latin America

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*Cold War and  
Counterrevolution*

THE FOREIGN POLICY OF

JOHN F. KENNEDY

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John F. Kennedy entered and we all stood up. He had, as Harold Macmillan would later say, earned his place in history by this one act alone.<sup>1</sup>

—THEODORE SORENSEN

But the ultimate impact of the missile crisis was wider than Cuba, wider even than the Western hemisphere. To the whole world it displayed the ripening of an American leadership unsurpassed in the responsible management of power. . . . By his own composure, clarity and control, he held the country behind him. It was almost as if he had begun to shape the nation in his own image. . . .

It was this combination of toughness and restraint, of will, nerve and wisdom, so brilliantly controlled, so matchlessly calibrated, that dazzled the world. Before the missile crisis people might have feared that we would use our power extravagantly or not use it at all. But the thirteen days gave the world—even the Soviet Union—a sense of American determination and responsibility in the use of power which, if sustained, might indeed become a turning point in the history of the relations between east and west.<sup>2</sup>

—ARTHUR SCHLESINGER

## CHAPTER SEVEN

# *The Cuban Missile Crisis*

It has been widely accepted that the Cuban missile crisis was the occasion of John Kennedy's greatest triumph. I disagree. I believe that his decision to go to the brink of nuclear war was irresponsible and reckless to a supreme degree, that it risked the kind of terrible miscalculation that Kennedy was always warning Khrushchev about, that it was unnecessary, and that, if one assumes minimum competence, the Kennedy administration knew it was not necessary. I argue, in short, ~~that Kennedy, without sufficient reason,~~

consciously risked nuclear catastrophe, with all that implied for the people not only of the United States and Russia but of the entire world. This is a harsh conclusion, but I believe the following account will sustain such an indictment.

Kennedy's apologists have written that, although the Bay of Pigs was a disaster, it prepared him for triumph in the Cuban missile crisis. They have so often written about how this or that crisis educated Kennedy—Laos, the Bay of Pigs, the Berlin crisis—that one is tempted to conclude that perhaps the function of the Presidency is education, not governance. One cannot blame such writers for trying to protect their friend, but the hard fact is that the Bay of Pigs was the major cause of the Cuban missile crisis. It convinced Castro and Khrushchev that Cuba was in serious danger from the United States. Their fear can hardly be dismissed as exaggerated, particularly when it was reinforced by a series of increasingly hostile acts. The Bay of Pigs, as noted earlier, caused Khrushchev on April 17, 1961, to send an angry diplomatic note to Washington, pledging "all necessary assistance to Castro." (Nor was this the first such foreshadowing. As early as July 9, 1960, while Eisenhower was still President, Khrushchev had declared that "speaking figuratively, in case of necessity, Soviet artillerymen can support the Cuban people with rocket fire."<sup>3</sup>)

If Khrushchev was committed to the defense of Cuba, and there is certainly no reason to doubt it, it is not surprising that he shared Castro's growing concern in the days and months following the Bay of Pigs. As early as April 20, 1961, rather than being chastened by the disastrous invasion, Kennedy had declared that "our restraint is not inexhaustible" in that speech in which he clearly hinted that the United States would not hesitate to use military action "should it ever appear that the inter-American doctrine of non-interference merely conceals or excuses a policy of nonaction—if the nations of this Hemisphere should fail to meet their commitments against outside communist penetration."<sup>4</sup> A week later he made another tough speech and on May 5, in a press conference, he said that the United States had no plans to train Cuban exiles as a Cuban force in this country or in any other country "at this time." To an alarmed Castro, this may not have sounded very reassuring.

Here, in chronological order, are some of the steps taken in

Washington that must have, in varying degrees, added to Castro's disquiet. In a press conference on August 30, 1961, the President, when asked about a recent statement of Castro's in which he said that the United States seemed afraid to negotiate with Cuba about problems of mutual concern, replied, "I've expressed my view that as long as Cuba makes itself a willing—the Cuban government makes itself a willing accomplice to the communist objectives in this hemisphere, that we could not have successful negotiations. And that, in my opinion, is what their status is today." Despite his proclamation in his inaugural address that the United States would never fear to negotiate, Kennedy refused to find out if talks were possible and if such talks might lead to improved Cuban-American relations.

On September 7, with Kennedy's support, Congress prohibited assistance to any country that aided Cuba unless the President determined that such assistance was in the national interest. Meanwhile, on September 20, a Soviet-Cuban communiqué proclaimed the "identity of positions of the Soviet Union and Cuba on all the international questions that were discussed."<sup>5</sup> Presumably the Soviet-Chinese split was not discussed, for on October 2 a Chinese-Cuban communiqué declared complete agreement on "the current international situation and the question of further developing friendship and cooperation." Castro was neatly straddling the chasm. And on December 2, Castro took what to many Americans was the last step. He declared that "I believe absolutely in Marxism. . . . I am a Marxist-Leninist and will be a Marxist-Leninist until the last day of my life." Some might take this statement as adequate justification for the previous and forthcoming hostile acts by the United States. Others might argue that Kennedy, as Khrushchev had told him at Vienna, was driving Castro deeper into the arms of the communists. In any case, Castro's moves were primarily rhetorical—his resources were limited—whereas Kennedy's moves had substance.

On December 6 the United States submitted a document to the Inter-American Peace Committee, discussing Cuba's ties to the communist world and its alleged threat to hemispheric security. This was the prelude to the severe political and economic measures soon to be taken, for only under unrelenting pressure from the United States would the Organization of American States

(OAS) move sharply against Cuba. On January 14, 1962, the Inter-American Peace Committee asserted that Cuba's ties with the communist countries were incompatible with inter-American treaties, principles, and standards—in short, that a sovereign state was not entitled to seek whatever ties it chose. In a press conference the next day President Kennedy said that he expected the Latin American foreign ministers to take action against Cuba at a meeting soon to open in Uruguay. His prediction was correct. Meeting at Punta del Este from January 22 through 31, the foreign ministers in effect ejected Cuba from the OAS. Although only Cuba voted against the resolution, six of the twenty-one nations abstained, among them the four most important in Latin America; Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Mexico. Assuming, as one must, that the State Department played a major role in drafting that and other anti-Cuban resolutions, it is interesting that there is frequent reference to the “Sino–Soviet bloc” and the “Sino–Soviet powers,” favorite bogey-man terms of Washington Cold Warriors that even the open hostility between Moscow and Peking could not retire.

Although the United States termed the conference a great success, it had not achieved the maximum United States goal, sanctions against Cuba. It was not possible to get approval for these, and even to get the necessary fourteen votes to exclude Cuba (there is considerable doubt that exclusion is possible under the OAS charter) the United States had to gather together a clutch of right-wing dictatorships, going so far as to submit to blackmail from Haiti to get its essential vote.<sup>6</sup> But even if success was not quite as great as claimed, the United States had succeeded in employing a technique that became fundamental to its anti-Castro crusade. It would, by sheer political and economic weight, force a measure through the OAS and then use this as public justification for what it was going to do anyway. Such authorization was not essential, but it provided a nice patina of legality that Washington much preferred to have.

Now, with the OAS in line, Washington felt free to act. On February 3, Kennedy declared an embargo on all trade with Cuba except for medical necessities. On February 20, Walt W. Rostow appeared before the NATO Council, urging its members in establishing their policies toward Cuba to take into account the OAS

decisions at Punta del Este. On March 24 the United States excluded the import of goods made in whole or part of Cuban products. Kennedy had drawn an economic and political noose tight around Cuba. This, compounding the Bay of Pigs, was undoubtedly a basic factor in the Khrushchev–Castro decision. It is not known when the decision to put Russian missiles on Cuban soil was made or when the program began. A good guess would be mid-1962, for in late July there was a step-up in Soviet shipments to Cuba, following a visit to Moscow in early July by Fidel's brother Raúl, Minister of the Armed Forces. On August 24, Washington disclosed that the flow of Soviet military supplies and technicians was increasing, and on August 28, Moscow announced that the volume of maritime shipments to Cuba in 1962 would be double that of the previous year.

It was at about this time, with the Congressional elections impending, that the possibility of Russian missiles in Cuba was first raised publicly. On September 1, Senator Kenneth Keating of New York (later to be unseated by Robert Kennedy) began his criticism of the President's Cuban policy. The next day Keating stepped up his attacks on Kennedy's “do nothing” policy and suggested that an OAS mission be sent to Cuba to determine if Soviet missile bases were being established. That same day the Soviet Union announced that it had agreed to supply arms and technical specialists to train Cubans to meet threats from “aggressive imperialist quarters.” The Kennedy administration, already handicapped by an uncooperative Congress, was concerned that the normal mid-term losses of the party in the White House might be increased if the Republicans could successfully make Cuba an issue despite Kennedy's hard-line approach. It therefore attempted to defuse the issue by declaring, as it continued to do for the next few weeks, that there was nothing new in Soviet–Cuban relations.

Since refugees, presumably the source of Keating's information, are notoriously unreliable, the Kennedy administration did not believe that surface-to-surface missiles with substantial range were in Cuba. The intelligence community knew that something was up, but the consensus had been that the Russians were putting in surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) to defend Cuba against air attack. Refugees would hardly be likely to have the sophisticated knowledge to distinguish between SAMs and longer-range missiles. Basic

to this conclusion was the knowledge that the Russians, unlike the Americans, had never put their missiles outside the Soviet Union, even in those East European countries where their control was almost absolute. This, plus the assessment that even the impulsive Khrushchev would not take such a provocative action, caused American intelligence to dismiss the possibility that long-range missiles were going to Cuba. Despite this consensus, John McCone, who after the Bay of Pigs had succeeded Allen Dulles as director of the CIA, on August 22 had conveyed to Kennedy his hunch that long-range missiles were being put into Cuba. His theory was that SAMs were being installed to protect the missile bases, for missile bases that were not safe from conventional attack were of little value. He believed that the Russians had not installed missiles of substantial range in East Europe because they feared they might be turned against them. However, such missiles could be installed in Cuba with sufficient range to reach much of the United States but unable to reach the Soviet Union if turned around.<sup>7</sup> Although much of this theory seems fanciful, the most important part was correct. Soviet missiles of substantial range were going into Cuba.

Kennedy was concerned enough to order special daily intelligence reports, and these began on August 27, even before Keating stated his charges. Needless to say, such charges received big play in the news, and Kennedy was invariably asked about Cuba in his press conferences. He played down the offensive significance of the Russian assistance. Other Republicans gleefully seized on the issue, despite the fact that Kennedy was carrying on an anti-Castro campaign of such severity that it was criticized in Europe, where people had no difficulty in seeing who was David and who was Goliath. Kennedy was obviously in political trouble, however absurd it was to accuse him of not being tough enough on Castro. Writers sympathetic to Kennedy are quick to dismiss any possibility that politics might have been a factor in the President's decision to go to the brink; one gets the impression that they hope that if they do not discuss the political implications, other writers will not either. But Kennedy was supremely political, and this factor cannot be dismissed quite so swiftly, for it was inescapable.

In a press conference on August 29, the President was asked to comment on a suggestion by Senator Homer Capehart, the militant

anti-communist Republican from Indiana, that the United States invade Cuba to stop the flow of troops and supplies. Kennedy attempted to brush off the question of troops and then went on to a discussion of "the mismanagement of the Cuban economy which has brought widespread dissatisfaction, economic slowdown, agricultural failures, which have been so typical of the communist regimes in so many parts of the world. So I think the situation was critical enough that they needed to be bolstered up."<sup>8</sup>

With a show of persistence rare at a presidential news conference, the reporter again asked Kennedy to comment on Capehart's suggestion. Again his answer was fuzzy: "I'm not for invading Cuba at this time. No, I don't—the words do not have some secondary meaning. I think it would be a mistake to invade Cuba, because I think it would lead to—that it should be very—an action like that, which could be very casually suggested, could lead to very serious consequences for many people." Again, Castro could hardly have been reassured by the use of the phrase "at this time." And, as we shall see, Robert Kennedy later disclosed that the United States government gave full consideration to the possibility of invading Cuba at the height of the crisis.

On August 31, Kennedy got the first hard evidence of SAMs from U-2 photographs taken two days earlier. The pace of events was beginning to quicken. On September 1, Keating made his first public charges. On September 2, in a communiqué marking a second visit by Che Guevara, Moscow declared that Cuba had requested help in the form of "armaments" and "specialists for training Cuban servicemen," to which the Soviet Union had responded because of threats from "aggressive imperialist quarters with regard to Cuba. As long as the above-mentioned quarters continue to threaten Cuba, the Cuban republic has every justification for taking necessary measures to insure its sovereignty and independence, while all Cuba's true friends have every right to respond to this legitimate request."<sup>9</sup> On September 4, Khrushchev sent Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin to see Robert Kennedy with a personal message for the President: he would not stir up any trouble in Berlin or Cuba during the American elections. And, Dobrynin assured the Attorney General, the Soviet Union would hardly give to any nation the power to involve it in a thermonuclear war. One cannot know whether he was instructed to deceive the Presi-

dent's brother or whether he himself did not know of the missiles and shared the American intelligence community's firm conviction that Khrushchev would not send such missiles outside Russia.<sup>10</sup>

The President was not reassured, and he issued a statement that same day disclosing that the United States had learned that the Soviet Union had provided Cuba with a number of anti-aircraft missiles with a slant range of twenty-five miles, the associated radar and electronic equipment, and several motor torpedo boats with ship-to-ship missiles with a range of fifteen miles. But more important was this section of the statement read to reporters by Press Secretary Salinger:

There is no evidence of any organized combat force in Cuba from any Soviet bloc country; of military bases provided to Russia; of a violation of the 1934 treaty relating to Guantanamo; of the presence of offensive ground-to-ground missiles; or of other significant offensive capability either in Cuban hands or under Soviet direction. Were it to be otherwise, the gravest issues would arise.<sup>11</sup>

Notice here what was to become very significant—not ground-to-ground missiles that could be used offensively (or defensively) but “offensive ground-to-ground missiles.” This is not merely a semantic exercise, for the purported fact that these were “offensive” missiles was absolutely crucial to the public justification of the extreme measures taken by President Kennedy. Whereas the Soviet missiles in Cuba were “offensive,” the American Jupiter missiles in Turkey and elsewhere, aimed at Russia were “defensive.” The Russians, of course, played the game too. Their missiles were “defensive” and ours were “offensive.” The parallel is exact, although the Kennedy administration and its defenders never admitted it.

The important thing for the moment was that Kennedy was warning the Russians. The stage was not Kennedy's alone. On September 7 the Republican leaders of the Senate and House chimed in with separate statements. Senator Everett McKinley Dirksen and Representative Charles A. Halleck, whose joint television appearances had been labeled, with approximately equal proportions of affection and derision, the “Ev and Charlie Show,” called for a joint resolution by Congress to authorize the President to use American armed forces as he deemed necessary. Inviting their Democratic counterparts to join them, they said, “This

course of action by Congress will reflect the determination and clear purpose of the American people and will demonstrate to the world the firmness of this nation in meeting this problem.”<sup>12</sup> Although they struck a statesmanlike pose, they were clearly trying to make political capital to help Republican candidates in the forthcoming Congressional elections. But Kennedy was not so easily outflanked, and that same day he sent a request to Congress asking for authorization to call up to 150,000 reservists for not more than twelve month's service. “In my judgment this renewed authorization is necessary to permit prompt and effective responses, as necessary, to challenges which may be presented in any part of the free world. . . .”<sup>13</sup>

It was now Moscow's turn. On September 11, Moscow issued a very long statement attacking the United States policy on Cuba. Although a bit overwrought in some passages, it did seem to communicate a genuine response to Kennedy's Cuban policy.

The whole world knows that the United States of America has ringed the Soviet Union and other Socialist countries with bases. What have they stationed there—tractors? Are they perhaps growing rice, wheat, potatoes, or some other farm crops there? No, they have brought armaments there in their ships, and these armaments, stationed along the frontiers of the Soviet Union—in Turkey, Iran, Greece, Italy, Britain, Holland, Pakistan and other countries belonging to the military blocs of NATO, CENTO and SEATO—are said to be there lawfully, by right. They consider this their right! But to others the United States does not permit this even for defense, and when measures are nevertheless taken to strengthen the defenses of this or that country the United States raises an outcry and declares that an attack, if you please, is being prepared against them. What conceit! . . .<sup>14</sup>

The statement also said that there was “no need for the Soviet Union to shift its weapons for the repulsion of aggression, for a retaliatory blow, to another country, for instance, Cuba. Our nuclear weapons are so powerful in their explosive force and the Soviet Union has such powerful rockets to carry these nuclear warheads, that there is no need to search for sites for them beyond the boundaries of the Soviet Union.” Moscow also made clear that an American attack on Cuba could mean nuclear war:

We have said and we do repeat that if war is unleashed, if the aggressor makes an attack on one state or another, and this state asks for assistance, the Soviet Union has the possibility from its own territory to render assistance. . . . If this attack is made, this will be the beginning of the unleashing of war.

Although this passage does not explicitly say that no Russian missiles would be put into Cuba, it certainly reads as if it were meant to give that impression.

But the long statement was not only aggrieved complaint and storm warning. There was also an appeal "to the government of the United States, urging it to display common sense, not to lose self-control and to soberly assess what its actions might lead to if it unleashes war."

Instead of aggravating the atmosphere by such actions as the mobilization of reserves, which is tantamount to the threat of starting war, it would be more sensible if the Government of the United States, displaying wisdom, would offer a kind gesture—would establish diplomatic and trade relations with Cuba, the desirability of which has been recently declared by the Cuban Government. If the American Government displayed this wisdom, the peoples would assess this properly as a realistic contribution of the United States to the relaxation of international tension, the strengthening of world peace.

If normal diplomatic and trade relations were established between the United States of America and Cuba, there would be no need for Cuba to strengthen her defenses, her armed forces. For then nobody would menace Cuba with war or other aggressive actions, and then the situation would become normal.

Although the foreign policy of the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe, particularly in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, has hardly been one to allow it to lecture others, in this case it was right. Whatever Russia's share in aggravating the Cuban crisis by installing missiles, the indisputable fact is that the United States by its unrelenting hostility to a weak and isolated Cuba caused the confrontation in the first place. And notice the final paragraph of the quotation from the Russian note. It says, in effect, that if Cuba were not threatened by the United States, it would not need "to strengthen its defenses."

On September 13, President Kennedy opened his press confer-

ence with a statement on Cuba. He said that while the movement of Soviet military personnel had increased, the United States had it "under our most careful surveillance," and he repeated his earlier conclusion that "these shipments do not constitute a serious threat to any other part of this hemisphere." However, Kennedy said, if the United States ever found it "necessary to take military action against communism in Cuba, all of Castro's communist-supplied weapons and technicians would not change the result or significantly extend the time required to achieve that result." But he declared that "unilateral military intervention on the part of the United States cannot *currently* [emphasis added] be either required or justified, and it is regrettable that loose talk about such action in this country might serve to give a thin color of legitimacy to the communist pretense that such a threat exists." The point, however, was not whether the United States was actively planning military action against Cuba but whether Castro had a legitimate basis for the fear of such action. Given the Bay of Pigs and American actions of the previous months, Castro's fears were reasonable, certainly more so than Washington's fear a year earlier that the Soviet Union might take physical action to prevent Western access to West Berlin. Again, Washington seemed almost totally unable to see the world as others saw it. And again in this statement Kennedy repeated his warning that if American security were endangered, "this country will do whatever must be done to protect its own security and that of its allies."

In succeeding days Republicans increased the political pressure; Senators Barry Goldwater, John Tower, Hugh Scott, Kenneth Keating, and even Jacob Javits called for various tough measures, including a blockade. Former Vice President Nixon joined the chorus on September 18, calling for a "quarantine" of Cuba. On September 20 the Senate and on September 26 the House passed a resolution authorizing the use of arms if necessary. For their part, the Russians increased the tempo of their warnings. Foreign Minister Gromyko repeated them at the United Nations on September 21, and on September 28 Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev, on a visit to Yugoslavia, reiterated that an American attack on Cuba would mean war. These may have been bluffs designed to deter the United States, but Washington could hardly be sure that they were.

With the Russians rushing to complete the missile sites and the Americans increasing the U-2 flights that would soon disclose them, events were moving swiftly and relentlessly toward the Soviet-American nuclear showdown that mankind had feared for a generation. *Yet there was no need for this dread confrontation. It could have been avoided by normal diplomacy.* This was made clear in a speech by Cuban President Osvaldo Dorticos on October 8, even before the U-2 cameras on October 14 confirmed the presence of missile sites. For some reason Kennedy's biographers brush past this speech, although the Kennedy administration knew of its importance. Adlai Stevenson quoted it in a statement to the press on October 23.

... finally, it is now apparent that President Dorticos of Cuba was admitting the existence of long-range nuclear weapons in Cuba when he told the General Assembly on October 8, "We have sufficient means with which to defend ourselves; we have indeed our inevitable weapons, the weapons which we would have preferred not to acquire and which we do not wish to employ."<sup>15</sup>

It is certainly true that this constitutes an admission by Dorticos, and one might assume that the Kennedy administration would have gone back to the speech and read it with particular care once, a week later, it became clear to what Dorticos was referring. Assuming normal competence by the high-powered team called together by Kennedy to consider policy, and assuming that if its members had somehow overlooked the speech, lower-level people would have called attention to it, the Kennedy administration could hardly have missed its significance. In his speech Dorticos quoted a statement made some days earlier by the Cuban Council of Ministers, one obviously approved by Castro.

Were the United States able to give Cuba effective guarantees and satisfactory proof concerning the integrity of Cuban territory, and were it to cease its subversive and counterrevolutionary activities against our people, then Cuba would not have to strengthen its defenses. Cuba would not even need an army, and all the resources that were used for this could be gratefully and happily invested in the economic and cultural development of the country.

Were the United States able to give up proof, by word and deed, that it would not carry out aggression against our country, then, we

declare solemnly before you here and now, our weapons would be unnecessary and our army redundant. We believe ourselves able to create peace.<sup>16</sup>

In short, if the United States guarantees Cuba's territorial integrity, Cuba will get rid of its nuclear weapons. Since that was precisely the agreement between Kennedy and Khrushchev that ended the fearful confrontation, it is inescapable that Kennedy did not have to go to the brink to have the missiles removed. A diplomatic avenue was expressly offered by the Cubans. Thus, it is difficult to avoid one of two conclusions: either the Kennedy administration somehow missed the significance of the Dorticos speech—which is incredible—or Kennedy decided to take the risk of nuclear war, real, but, as he believed, limited, for reasons beyond just the removal of the missiles. Here it is instructive to look back at the Berlin crisis. There, as we saw, Kennedy shared Acheson's view that the crisis had little or nothing to do with Berlin; it was a test of American resolve. Now, with Cuba (again with Acheson in a key advisory role), Kennedy again took the view that the issue was not primarily Cuba but another test of American determination, demonstrating anew the American instinct to rush from the particular to the general. Even before the Kennedy administration had hard knowledge of the missile sites, it had yet again dismissed the possibility of Cuban-American talks to ease tensions between the two countries. It saw the issue not primarily as one of Cuban-American relations but as a crucial episode in the Cold War. This is clear from Adlai Stevenson's prompt response to Dorticos:

The President of Cuba professes that Cuba has always been willing to hold discussions with the United States to improve relations and to reduce tensions. But what he really wishes us to do is to place the seal of approval on the existence of a communist regime in the Western Hemisphere. The maintenance of communism in the Americas is not negotiable. . . .

If the Cuban regime is sincere in its request for negotiations and wishes to lay its grievances before the appropriate forum—the Organization of American States—I would suggest the Cuban government might start by some action calculated to awake the confidence of the inter-American system.<sup>17</sup>



In short, the United States flatly refused to talk with Cuba. Cuba was not supposed to exercise its sovereign right to associate with whatever nations it chose, and if it wanted to air its grievances it should do so not in the United Nations, where there were friendly and neutral states as well as enemies, but in the OAS that was an instrument of the very power against whom it had legitimate grievances.

We have seen that even before his election Kennedy uttered the rhetoric of the anti-communist crusader. We have seen how he moved swiftly to build up American military might even though it was, as he knew, "sufficient beyond doubt" by many times. We have seen how he authorized the Bay of Pigs, and we have seen how he exaggerated the Berlin crisis, moving toward nuclear confrontation and then backing away. But even though he did back away then, he still believed that a confrontation might be necessary. As he told James Wechsler of the *New York Post*,

... What worried him was that Khrushchev might interpret his reluctance to wage nuclear war as a symptom of an American loss of nerve. Some day, he said, the time might come when he would have to run the supreme risk to convince Khrushchev that conciliation did not mean humiliation. "If Khrushchev wants to rub my nose in the dirt," he told Wechsler, "it's all over." But how to convince Khrushchev short of a showdown? "That son of a bitch won't pay any attention to words," the President said bitterly on another occasion. "He has to see you move." <sup>18</sup>

Given the *machismo* quality in Kennedy's character, his fervent anti-communism, and his acceptance of the basic assumptions of American postwar foreign policy, it is not fanciful to conclude that he was not adverse to a showdown. When Khrushchev foolishly and recklessly put missiles into Cuba, he gave Kennedy the opportunity for a showdown, not in Berlin, where the Russians had all the strategic advantages, but only ninety miles from the United States, where the Russians had to operate at the end of a long and vulnerable supply line.

Two days after the Dorticos-Stevenson exchange at the United Nations, Senator Keating returned to the attack, asserting on October 10 that he had "100 per cent reliable" information that the Russians were building six intermediate-range missile sites. Al-

though it is not crucial to this discussion, there is some reason to believe that the government was indeed slow in concluding that there was a strong possibility that missile sites were being constructed. As is so often the case, the administration had a vested interest in proving the Republican attackers wrong, so it tended to overlook evidence that did not suit it. However, hard evidence was soon to come. On October 14 a U-2 flight over western Cuba came back with photographs. They were analyzed that night and the next day, and by late in the afternoon of Monday, October 15, the beginnings of a missile site had been detected near San Cristobal. The analysts were fairly certain of their findings by evening, and McGeorge Bundy was notified. He decided that there was nothing the President could do immediately but order more photographs, so Bundy, himself giving that order, did not notify the President, feeling, no doubt correctly, that a good night's sleep was more important in view of the decisions that would soon have to be made.<sup>19</sup>

On Tuesday morning, October 16, Bundy gave Kennedy the startling news. The President was furious; if, after all his denials and protestations, Khrushchev could pull this, how could he ever be trusted again on anything? Throughout the various accounts of these fearful days there is frequent reference to the Russians' "deceit," "duplicity," etc. There was deception involved, to be sure. But it is not clear whether Khrushchev or Gromyko or others with specific knowledge ever said, before the sites were spotted, explicitly that ground-to-ground missiles were not being installed in Cuba. Certainly, according to various accounts, the Russians usually said that offensive weapons were not being sent to Cuba. If that was all they said, then the debate is semantic. But even if there were specific denials of ground-to-ground missiles, the reader will have to decide for himself whether or not they fall into the category of justifiable military secrecy, as beloved by American warriors as by any others. Neither the Americans nor the Russians normally disclosed the character of military moves when they believed it in the national interest that they remain secret. Nor had Kennedy, as we have seen, always been entirely candid in his public statements about, for instance, Laos and Cuba.

It was the fact of the missile sites that was paramount, not the stealth of their installation. In any case, after the Keating disclo-

tures, the Russians must have expected from their own bitter experience with U-2s that the sites would soon be spotted, however much they might have hoped to present the United States with a *fait accompli*. However, just as it would be unrealistic to expect the Russians to tell the Americans exactly what they were doing in Cuba, it would be unrealistic to expect the United States not to make effective use of charges of "deceit" and "duplicity" in the propaganda battle that soon erupted.

Before again picking up the chain of events, it is necessary to point out something that Kennedy's admirers do not, for obvious reasons, stress. Castro had every right to ask for, and Khrushchev had every right to offer—whichever came first—the installation of Russian missiles on Cuban soil. Not only was this permissible by international law, but it was the United States that had established the precedent by installing Jupiter missiles in Turkey, right next to Russia, in Italy, and elsewhere. The American missiles had been "practically forced on" Turkey and Italy by the Eisenhower administration.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, if it makes any difference, there is evidence that Cuba asked for the Russian missiles. Castro said so in an interview with Lee Lockwood in 1965.

Naturally the missiles would not have been sent in the first place if the Soviet Union had not been prepared to send them. But . . . we made the decision at a moment when we thought that concrete measures were necessary to paralyze the aggressiveness of the United States, and we posed this necessity to the Soviet Union.<sup>21</sup>

Nonetheless, there is all the difference in the world between having the right to do something and deciding to do it. Just as Washington often does not take into adequate consideration Moscow's response to an American action, so too in this case Khrushchev failed to see what should have been obvious. (Since one cannot know what goes into decisions in the Kremlin, it is possible that Khrushchev too was seeking a confrontation. But if he was, it is scarcely credible that he would have wanted that kind of confrontation in a place so terribly disadvantageous to the Soviet Union.) Khrushchev, or certainly his advisers, should have recognized from even the most superficial knowledge of American post-war foreign policy and American politics that no President (least of all one with Kennedy's character and record) could tolerate the

installation of Russian missiles in Cuba, particularly right before an election. However unfair it might be for the Americans to expect the Russians to live under the shadow of United States missiles in Turkey yet refuse to permit a reciprocal situation, that was simply the way it was. This must have seemed outrageous to the Russians. Certainly it seemed unfair to millions in other nations, even to some Americans, but it was the reality of the situation. Khrushchev had miscalculated badly. The question then for Kennedy was not whether to remove the missiles but how.

Kennedy's first instinct was to take some kind of military action, perhaps to bomb the missile sites, but before reaching a decision he called into being an *ad hoc* group that came to be known as the ExCom. It was composed of a constantly shifting combination of top officials from the White House, the State Department, the Pentagon, plus Attorney General Kennedy, Treasury Secretary Dillon, and Dean Acheson. Although it took them several days of intense, and tense, discussions to settle on the course eventually taken, two decisions were made quickly. The first (the most important and dangerous) was that a political and diplomatic solution should not be sought. This is what has since been written by Adam Yarmolinsky:

From the discovery of the missiles on October 14 until October 28, when Khrushchev promised to remove them, the executive committee of the National Security Council (ExCom) spent at least 90% of its time studying alternate uses of troops, bombers and warships. Although the possibility of seeking withdrawal of the missiles by straightforward diplomatic negotiation received some attention within the State Department, it seems scarcely to have been aired in the ExCom.<sup>22</sup>

One of the few participants persistently to urge a diplomatic approach was Adlai Stevenson, who suggested, among other things, that the missiles on Cuba could be swapped for those, already obsolescent, in Turkey and Italy. For this Stevenson again became the object of Acheson's scorn. In a piece in the *Saturday Evening Post* some weeks later, he was accused of having advocated "a Munich." (The authors, Charles Bartlett and Stewart Alsop, both close to Kennedy, denied that the President was the source of the story, as did Kennedy himself, whereas Otto Friedrich, an editor of the *Post*, has written that he was.) More important than the at-

tack on Stevenson, evidently by a number of the hard-liners in the ExCom, was the fact that he was right and they were wrong. Although anti-communist, Stevenson was not virulently so, and it is difficult to believe that if he had been elected President in 1960, or earlier, there would have been the dangerous Berlin crisis or that the United States would have become involved in either of the Cuban crises or so deeply in Vietnam.<sup>23</sup>

Stemming from this decision not to seek a political/diplomatic solution was the decision to announce simultaneously, if at all possible, that the United States had uncovered the Russian move and what it intended to do about it. This "was not so inconsequential as it sounded—it expressed the President's determination not to be dragged along in the wake of events, but to control them."<sup>24</sup> This has a nice ring to it, but with the elections only a couple of weeks away, it is hard to believe that Kennedy was not concerned that the Republicans might finally smoke out convincing proof of the presence of Soviet missiles. This would have been a political disaster, probably costing the Democrats a number of Congressional seats, even if Khrushchev remained silent, thus keeping his pledge not to embarrass the administration before Election Day. It would be even worse if a public furor made Khrushchev feel that he had to come forward and proclaim himself as the defender of tiny, beleaguered Cuba. No, it would be much better if Kennedy could strike first, accusing Khrushchev of a deceitful and dangerous plot against hemispheric security and disclosing a dynamic plan to frustrate the communist plot. This move would have a double advantage: it would put Khrushchev in his place for once and for all, and it would blunt the Republican charge, perhaps even help Democratic candidates. Although Kennedy's admirers play down the political aspect, it is almost inconceivable that it was not a factor—almost certainly not the major one, but a factor nonetheless.

The ExCom spent long, contentious hours in discussion while Kennedy carried on his campaign travel and the ExCom members tried to stick close to their normal routine so as to preserve secrecy. Obviously, a first consideration was Khrushchev's intentions. According to Sorensen, there were five basic theories:<sup>25</sup>

1. The missile installation was a Cold War move to test American resolve and to discredit American strength and reliability as

an ally. If it succeeded, Khrushchev could then move boldly on West Berlin or in Latin America.

2. If the United States responded by attacking Cuba, its energies would be diverted. This diversion plus worldwide censure and division at home would free Khrushchev to move elsewhere, again in Berlin or Latin America.

3. The installation was intended to defend Cuba, in which Khrushchev now had the same kind of credibility stake as did the United States in supporting its weaker allies.

4. The missiles were intended as a bargaining counter. Khrushchev in a summit or United Nations confrontation could bargain away the missile bases for a favorable settlement in Berlin or a reduction of American overseas bases.

5. The Soviet Union wished to improve its military posture by positioning missiles that were both much cheaper than intercontinental missiles and able to avoid most of the American early-warning system.

Kennedy believed that while the third and fifth theories might have some validity, they were insufficient motives for so drastic a move. He leaned, for reasons I have discussed earlier, toward the first theory, of which the second and fourth were merely variations. Again, Washington could not resist the conviction that any Soviet-American dispute was not limited to the question at hand but represented a fundamental test of American courage. This conviction has been a basic cause of the Cold War and a fundamental block to improved relations between the United States and the Soviet Union and China. Much of the death, destruction, and misery, much of the international tension and domestic turmoil of the past quarter-century has been born of Washington's conditioned reflex to spring immediately from the particular to the general. And now Kennedy was doing it again.

Documentary proof of Khrushchev's intentions may be long in coming, and Russia's consistency before, during, and after the crisis in maintaining that its sole motivation was to defend Cuba is hardly sufficient. Often the simplest explanation is the best, and it is not unlikely that Cuba's defense was a predominant motive, although Khrushchev may well have hoped for valuable fringe benefits in Latin America and throughout the world. But the crucial question was: What dangers could result from the missiles? This

was the question raised by theory number five. Although such missiles would offer certain advantages, "these Cuban missiles alone, in view of all the other megatonnage the Soviets were capable of unleashing upon us, did not substantially alter the strategic balance *in fact*. . . ." <sup>26</sup> On a television program two weeks after the crisis, Deputy Defense Secretary Roswell Gilpatric put it this way: "I don't believe that we were under any greater threat from the Soviet Union's power, taken in totality, after this than before." <sup>27</sup>

A blunt public ultimatum, issued to the impulsive leader of a powerful nation at a dangerous moment, can be justified, if ever, only at a time of supreme physical danger. Yet the United States was not in any immediate physical danger, and the Kennedy administration knew it. Furthermore, it was entirely confident that Khrushchev had neither the intention nor even the desire to *use* the missiles he was putting into Cuba. Kennedy put it this way in a television interview on December 17, 1962:

They were planning in November to open to the world the fact that they had these missiles so close to the United States; not that they were intending to fire them, because if they were going to get into a nuclear struggle, they have their own missiles in the Soviet Union. But it would have politically changed the balance of power. It would have appeared to, and appearances contribute to reality. <sup>28</sup>

There is no doubt that Khrushchev made a serious and dangerous miscalculation, nor is there any doubt that, given the political realities, Kennedy had to get the missiles removed. But Kennedy did not have to add to Khrushchev's miscalculation an even more dangerous one of his own. Even though there was every reason to hope that Khrushchev would back away from a military confrontation under such disadvantageous circumstances, there was no certain way to predict his response to a public ultimatum. It was, of course, possible that Kennedy might in the end have to resort to military pressure to remove the missiles, but why was it necessary to do so in the very first instance, even if Dorticos had not already indicated the basis for a diplomatic solution? Kennedy embarked on a dangerous path with unforeseeable consequences not because of immediate physical danger but because missiles on Cuba

"would have politically changed the balance of power." He took an unpardonable mortal risk without just cause. He threatened the lives of millions for appearances' sake.

To get back to the narrative, on Thursday, October 18, the President held what was billed as a routine meeting with Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko, who was in the United States for the United Nations General Assembly session. It was a long meeting, and the White House let it be assumed that Berlin was the major topic. But foremost in Kennedy's mind was Cuba. Although tempted to pull the U-2 photos out of his desk and confront Gromyko with them, Kennedy stuck to his plan. But he warned the Russians by reading aloud his earlier warnings of September 4 and 13. Assuming that Gromyko knew of the missiles, he must have concluded from this warning that Kennedy also knew of them, yet he too stuck to his plans and merely assured the President that the Russian military aid "was by no means offensive," that "if it were otherwise, the Soviet government would never become involved." <sup>29</sup> Kennedy deliberately neglected a perfect opportunity to seek a diplomatic solution.

Having decided not to seek a diplomatic solution by approaching Russia and/or Cuba, Kennedy and the ExCom had to settle on another approach. They had, it was estimated "about ten days before the missiles would be on pads ready for firing. The deadline defined the strategy. It meant that the response could not, for example, be confided to the UN, where the Soviet delegation would have ample opportunity to stall action until the nuclear weapons were in place and on target. It meant that we could not even risk the delay involved in consulting our allies. It meant that total response had to fall on the United States and its President." <sup>30</sup>

That is nonsense. Since the Kennedy administration knew that the Cuban missiles were not a significant military factor and since it was confident that they would not be fired, completion of their installation was an artificial deadline. It was of no immediate consequence, except for whatever political capital Khrushchev could make of it. The reasons for not relying on the United Nations were different. In the first place, Russia could make a good case that it was doing only what the United States was doing in Turkey, Italy, and elsewhere. Second, the United Nations as a whole

would hardly take the alarmist view of the situation held by Washington. Many United Nations members, even allies, had long thought that the United States was entirely too preoccupied with Cuba.

Consulting with allies might well, as the administration argued, have meant a break in the secrecy that Kennedy had decreed, and the allies, by urging a more cautious approach, might have hampered Kennedy's freedom of action. But beyond these points, this question of consultation is a very serious one. Kennedy was preparing to go to the brink of a nuclear war that, if it erupted, would inevitably involve NATO allies at great human cost, yet he excluded them from such a fateful decision. To paraphrase the American colonists, it would be nuclear war without representation. Neither friend nor foe would be notified until Washington had decided, unilaterally, what to do.

Within the ExCom the idea of a "surgical strike" by bombers was at first appealing. However, there were too many dangers. Such a strike could be effective, if at all, only if it were a surprise. This would mean the death and wounding of Russians as well as Cuban military men and could affect civilians as well. Robert Kennedy was adamantly opposed. It would be "a Pearl Harbor in reverse."<sup>31</sup> It would be wrong and it would cause revulsion all over the world. Furthermore, it might well trigger a nuclear response from Russia. So too might an invasion. Yet even while the discussions were under way orders went out to all the military services. Ships were concentrated in the Caribbean, troops in Florida, and the Air Force was ready. Preparations were also made for nuclear war if the situation should come to that. Gradually, however, sentiment moved away from endorsement of a military strike to the idea of a blockade. Although there was a feeling that a blockade might be too slow, it seemed less risky and the other options were still available if it did not work. Someone with a touch of public-relations genius proposed that the term "quarantine," earlier suggested by Richard Nixon, be used. It seemed less belligerent and had a nice medical sound to it. Nonetheless, a blockade by any other name is still an act of war. Thus the stage was set for what was probably the most dramatic and most frightening presidential address in the history of the republic. The nation knew that something serious was up. It knew it had to do with Cuba,

but the secrecy had held. Kennedy's speech on Monday night, October 22, came as a complete and numbing surprise.

The President got directly to the point:

Within the past week, unmistakable evidence has established the fact that a series of offensive missile sites is now in preparation on that imprisoned island. The purpose of these bases can be none other than to provide a nuclear strike capability against the Western Hemisphere. . . .

This secret, swift, and extraordinary buildup of communist missiles—in an area well known to have a special and historic relationship to the United States and the nations of the Western Hemisphere, in violation of Soviet assurances, and in defiance of American and hemispheric policy—this sudden, clandestine decision to station strategic weapons for the first time outside of Soviet soil—is a deliberately provocative and unjustified change in the status quo which cannot be accepted by this country, if our courage and our commitments are ever to be trusted again by either friend or foe.<sup>32</sup>

Kennedy announced that action was necessary to secure the "withdrawal or elimination" of the missiles from Cuba.

. . . action is required—and it is under way; and these actions may only be the beginning. We will not prematurely or unnecessarily risk the costs of worldwide nuclear war in which even the fruits of victory would be ashes in our mouth—but *neither will we shrink from that risk at any time it must be faced.* [Emphasis added.]

The President outlined the steps he was ordering. Among them was the establishment of a "quarantine"—blockade—of all "offensive" weapons, a blockade that would "be extended, if needed, to other types of cargo and carriers." There would also be increased surveillance of Cuba. "Should these offensive military preparations continue, further action will be justified. I have directed the Armed Forces to prepare for any eventualities; and I trust that in the interest of both the Cuban people and the Soviet technicians at the sites, the hazards to all concerned of continuing this threat will be recognized."

Then the most alarming statement of all, reinforcing the impression that the world was on the brink of nuclear war:

. . . It shall be the policy of this Nation to regard any nuclear missile launched from Cuba against any nation in the Western Hemi-

sphere as an attack by the Soviet Union on the United States, requiring a full retaliatory response upon the Soviet Union.

Again and again Kennedy's admirers have written that the President did not want to humiliate Khrushchev or back him into a corner. Robert Kennedy put it this way:

Neither side wanted war over Cuba, we agreed, but it was possible that either side could take a step that—for reasons of "security" or "pride" or "face"—would require a response by the other side, which in turn, for the same reasons of security, pride or face, would bring about a counter-response and eventually an escalation into armed conflict. That was what he [the President] wanted to avoid. . . . We were not going to misjudge, or miscalculate, or challenge the other side needlessly, or precipitously push our adversaries into a course of action that was not intended or anticipated.<sup>33</sup>

Yet how does that square with the facts? President Kennedy went on radio and television, accused Russia of deception and deliberate provocation, ordered a blockade, and told Khrushchev that he must back down or be faced with further steps, including, if necessary, nuclear war. However one chooses to describe it, this was an ultimatum, and a public and humiliating one at that. It was given, for all practical purposes, with no warning. Ambassador Dobrynin got the text of the President's message at 6 p.m., only an hour before the President spoke, and it was conveyed to the Russian Foreign Office in the Kremlin a few minutes later—after midnight, Russian time.

Khrushchev did not share the view that his pride had been spared. Both in public statements and in a private message to Kennedy he accused the United States of piratical acts. In a private letter received by Kennedy on October 23, he accused the President of threatening him and the Soviet Union and he said Russia would not observe the blockade. "The actions of the USA with regard to Cuba are outright banditry or, if you like, the folly of degenerate imperialism." He said the United States was pushing mankind "to the abyss of a world missile-nuclear war." The USSR would not order its ship captains to obey the commands of the American Navy, and if any effort were made to interfere with Soviet ships, "we would then be forced for our part to take the measures which we deem necessary and adequate in order to protect

our rights. For this we have all that is necessary."<sup>34</sup> Khrushchev may have meant Soviet submarines that were detected moving into the area. He certainly did not sound like a man whom it would be profitable to press further.

It was, as no one can doubt, the United States that was putting on the pressure, not the Soviet Union. It seems not to have occurred to the President that Khrushchev might believe that Russia was in the right in sending missiles to Cuba and that to attempt to use an act of war to force him to back down was to take a dangerous risk of triggering a military response. Kennedy was asking for unconditional and public surrender from a proud and powerful adversary that may well have believed itself in the right and the United States in the wrong.

However, Kennedy did succeed in taking the political offensive. At the United Nations, where the public contest was fought, Adlai Stevenson succeeded in capturing the role of prosecutor for himself, forcing Valerian Zorin into the role of defendant. Russia obviously had a creditable case: that it was helping defend Cuba against the demonstrated hostility of the United States, that it was doing no more in Cuba than the United States had done in Turkey. Nonetheless, Stevenson, materially aided by the American press, read and listened to by the United Nations delegates every day, kept the offensive, culminating in the now-famous until-hell-freezes-over speech:<sup>35</sup>

. . . Well, let me say something to you, Mr. Ambassador, we do have the evidence. We have it, and it is clear and incontrovertible. And let me say something else. These weapons must be taken out of Cuba. . . . You, the Soviet Union, have sent these weapons to Cuba. You, the Soviet Union, have created this new danger—not the United States. . . .

Finally, Mr. Zorin, I remind you that the other day you did not deny the existence of these weapons. But today, again, if I heard you correctly, you now say that they do not exist, or that we haven't proved they exist.

All right, sir, let me ask you one simple question. Do you, Ambassador Zorin, deny that the USSR has placed and is placing medium- and intermediate-range missiles and sites in Cuba? Yes or no? Don't wait for the translation, yes or no?

ZORIN: I am not in an American courtroom, sir, and therefore I do not wish to answer a question that is put to me in the fashion in

which a prosecutor puts questions. In due course, sir, you will have your answer.

STEVENSON: You are in the courtroom of world opinion right now, and you can answer yes or no. You have denied that they exist, and I want to know whether I have understood you correctly.

ZORIN: Continue with your statement. You will have your answer in due course.

STEVENSON: I am prepared to wait for my answer until hell freezes over, if that's your decision. And I am also prepared to present the evidence in this room.<sup>36</sup>

With that, Stevenson aides set up easels in the corner of the Security Council chamber and showed, with great effect, huge blow-ups of the missiles. This dramatic confrontation, watched by millions on television, made Stevenson a national hero, even with those who in the past had accepted the absurd Republican charges that he was somehow soft on communism. But Stevenson himself later concluded that he had gone a bit overboard and, in responding to the drama of the moment, had backed Zorin too far into a corner.

Although the attention of a fearful world was focused on the United Nations Security Council, where the visible drama was being played out before television cameras, the vital decisions were being made in Washington and Moscow. Nonetheless, the United Nations did have an important function. It was at the United Nations on Tuesday, October 23, that the Cuban Ambassador, Dr. Mario Garcia-Inchaustegui, repeated the Dorticos statement of October 8: "Were the United States able to give proof, by word and deed, that it would not carry out aggression against our country, then, we declare solemnly before you here and now, our weapons would be unnecessary and our army redundant." If there had been any earlier doubt as to the meaning of these words, it was now removed. And at the United Nations the word was passed in specific terms: if the United States would guarantee Cuba's territorial integrity, Cuba and the USSR would agree to remove the missiles.

Nonetheless, Kennedy continued to press for unconditional surrender with all its unforeseeable consequences. But then there was a timely, and crucial, intervention by U Thant, Acting Secretary General following the death the year before of Dag Hammar-

skjöld. With Soviet ships nearing the United States blockade line 500 miles off Cuba, Thant, on Wednesday, October 24, sent identical messages to Kennedy and Khrushchev. Stressing that it was essential to avoid an aggravation of the situation that might lead to war, and essential to provide time for negotiations, Thant asked for "the voluntary suspension of all arms shipments to Cuba, and also the voluntary suspension of the quarantine measures. . . ." He also asked that work be stopped on the missile sites and pointed to the Dorticos statement as a possible basis of agreement.

Khrushchev immediately accepted U Thant's proposal. Some have argued that he seized upon it as a way to save face, to claim that he had stopped his ships in response to Thant's appeal rather than to Kennedy's ultimatum. That may be so, but there is no more reason to believe that than to believe that he would have attempted to force the blockade had not Thant made his appeal. He may have responded to Thant's appeal because he was genuinely seeking a way to avoid a physical clash that could easily—and swiftly—escalate to nuclear war. This was his purpose, he said in reply to Bertrand Russell, who had sent him a message: "May I humbly appeal for your further help in lowering the temperature. . . . Your continued forbearance is our great hope." In reply to Russell, Khrushchev said:

. . . I should like to assure you that the Soviet Government will not take any reckless decisions, will not permit itself to be provoked by the unwarranted actions of the United States of America and will do everything to eliminate the situation fraught with irreparable consequences which has arisen in connection with the aggressive actions of the United States Government. We shall do everything in our power to prevent war from breaking out. We are fully aware of the fact that if this war is unleashed, from the very first hour it will become a thermonuclear and world war. This is perfectly obvious to us, but clearly is not to the Government of the United States which has caused this crisis. . . .

The Soviet Government considers that the Government of the United States of America must display reserve and stay the execution of its piratical threats which are fraught with the most serious consequences.

The question of war and peace is so vital that we should consider useful a top-level meeting in order to discuss all the problems which have arisen, to do everything to remove the danger of unleashing a

thermonuclear war. As long as rocket nuclear weapons are not put into play it is still possible to avert war. When aggression is unleashed by the Americans such a meeting will already become impossible and useless.<sup>37</sup>

Kennedy's replies to Thant and Russell were somewhat different in substance and tone. To Thant he wrote on October 25:

. . . As we made clear in the Security Council, the existing threat was created by the secret introduction of offensive weapons into Cuba, and the answer lies in the removal of such weapons.

In your message and in your statement to the Security Council, you have made certain suggestions and have invited preliminary talks to determine whether satisfactory arrangements can be assured.

Ambassador Stevenson is ready to discuss these arrangements with you.

I can assure you of our desire to reach a satisfactory and peaceful solution of the matter.<sup>38</sup>

Still no suggestion that the United States was prepared to accept anything short of unconditional surrender.

Russell's message to Kennedy, although extreme, represented an important school of thought in British public opinion: "Your action desperate. . . . No conceivable justification. We will not have mass murder. . . . End this madness."<sup>39</sup> Although one cannot question the aged philosopher's sincerity, or perhaps even his essential correctness, his telegram was provocative. It was not surprising that Kennedy replied in these terms:

. . . While your messages are critical of the United States, they make no mention of your concern for the introduction of secret Soviet missiles into Cuba. I think your attention might well be directed to the burglars rather than to those who have caught the burglars.<sup>40</sup>

On Thursday, October 25, some of the Soviet ships stopped or turned around, presumably because of Khrushchev's acceptance of U Thant's proposal and the elaboration of it made on that day. In this "continuation of my message of yesterday," Thant said:

. . . I would like to bring to Your Excellency's attention my grave concern that Soviet ships already on their way to Cuba might chal-

lenge the quarantine imposed by the United States and produce a confrontation at sea between Soviet ships and United States vessels which could lead to an aggravation of the situation. What concerns me most is that such a confrontation and consequent aggravation of the situation would destroy any possibility of the discussions I have suggested as a prelude to negotiations on a peaceful settlement. In the circumstances I earnestly hope that Your Excellency may find it possible to instruct the Soviet ships already on their way to Cuba to stay away from the interception zone for a limited time only, in order to permit discussions of the modalities of a possible agreement which could settle the problem peacefully in line with the Charter of the United Nations.

I am confident that, if such instruction could be issued by Your Excellency, the United States authorities will take action to ensure that a direct confrontation between their ships and Soviet ships is avoided during the same period in order to minimize the risk of any untoward incident taking place.

If I could be informed of the action taken by your Government on the basis of this appeal, I could inform President Kennedy that I have assurances from your side of your cooperation in avoiding all risk of an untoward incident.<sup>41</sup>

Thant also sent a similar message to Kennedy, in which he asked the President to instruct United States naval vessels to avoid a confrontation.<sup>42</sup>

Kennedy replied the same day that he would accept the proposal if Khrushchev did, but again he stressed the urgent need that the Soviet missiles be removed.<sup>43</sup> Khrushchev replied affirmatively the next day (Soviet replies often took longer because of the time difference between New York and Moscow) but he asserted that "we have given this order in the hope that the other side will understand that such a situation, in which we keep vessels immobilized on the high seas, must be a purely temporary one; the period cannot under any circumstances be of long duration."<sup>44</sup>

The decision was much easier for Kennedy than for Khrushchev, for if Khrushchev stopped his ships, for whatever reason, it meant that the blockade was effective. Whether Thant's appeal was the reason or only the occasion for Khrushchev's not forcing the blockade, the Acting Secretary General is responsible for the breathing space that avoided confrontation at sea—and possible escalation into nuclear war. American writers have generally un-



derestimated Thant's crucial contribution to the settlement of the missile crisis.

The crisis was almost over, although, as we shall see, it was briefly to enter a stage even more dangerous than before. On Friday, October 26, the United States received, via two unorthodox channels, proposals that seemed to mean a peaceful end to the crisis. The more unusual came through John Scali, the experienced and talented diplomatic correspondent for the American Broadcasting Corporation, who received a telephone call from Aleksandr S. Fomin of the Soviet Embassy. The Soviet diplomat said it was imperative that they meet immediately. At a restaurant Fomin asked Scali if the State Department would be interested in settling the crisis on this basis: 1) the missiles would be shipped back to Russia under United Nations supervision; 2) Castro would pledge not to accept offensive weapons; 3) the United States would pledge not to invade Cuba. Scali thought this was a possible basis for a settlement and rushed off to the State Department with the Russian proposal.

Somewhat less unorthodox and more important was a proposal direct from Khrushchev himself. In a personal letter to Kennedy—Khrushchev a year earlier had begun writing such letters to the President—the Premier appealed for an end to the crisis in the most urgent and emotional terms. Some have suggested that when Khrushchev wrote the letter he was so unstable or emotional that the message was incoherent. Robert Kennedy addressed this directly:

There was no question that the letter had been written by him personally. It was very long and emotional. But it was not incoherent, and the emotion was directed at the death, destruction, and anarchy that nuclear war would bring to his people and all mankind. That, he said again and again, and in many different ways, must be avoided.<sup>45</sup>

Although Khrushchev's letter has yet to be made public, it can be reconstructed to a considerable degree, particularly from the accounts given by Robert Kennedy and by Elie Abel in *The Missile Crisis*. He said the time had come to rise above "petty passions" and stop the drift toward war before it was too late. He said that the forthcoming elections were "transient things," but

that "if indeed war should break out, then it would not be in our power to stop it, for such is the logic of war." Khrushchev wrote that it was obvious that he and Kennedy could not agree on the significance of the Soviet missiles, but he insisted that they were not offensive weapons, that they would never be used to attack the United States:

You can be calm in this regard, that we are of sound mind and understand perfectly well that if we attack you, you will respond the same way. But you too will receive the same that you hurl against us. And I think that you also understand this. . . . This indicates that we are normal people, that we correctly understand and correctly evaluate the situation. Consequently, how can we permit the incorrect actions which you ascribe to us? Only lunatics or suicides, who themselves want to perish and to destroy the whole world before they died, could do this.

Khrushchev assured Kennedy: "We want something quite different . . . not to destroy your country . . . but despite our ideological differences, to compete peacefully, not by military means." He said there was no need to stop the Soviet ships en route to Cuba, for they carried only nonmilitary cargo; the missiles were already there. This was Khrushchev's first acknowledgment that there were indeed Soviet missiles in Cuba. He said that he could not be sure that Kennedy would believe this, but he hoped the President would not stop Soviet ships, for that would be piracy. If the ships were stopped, Russia would be forced to defend them, as it had the right to do under international law, and no man could know where this might lead.

Then Khrushchev made directly the proposal suggested by President Dorticos on October 8, by Cuban Ambassador Garcia-Inchaustegui on October 23, and informally by Mr. Fomin to John Scali that same day:

. . . If assurances were given that the President of the United States would not participate in an attack on Cuba and the blockade lifted, then the question of the removal or the destruction of the missile sites in Cuba would then be an entirely different question. Armaments bring only disasters. When one accumulates them, this damages the economy, and if one puts them to use, then they destroy people on both sides. Consequently, only a madman can be-

lieve that armaments are the principal means in the life of a society. No, they are an enforced loss of human energy, and what is more are for the destruction of man himself. If people do not show wisdom, then in the final analysis they will come to a clash, like blind moles, and then reciprocal extermination will begin.<sup>46</sup>

Then Khrushchev made his proposal specific. No more such weapons would be sent to Cuba and those already there would be withdrawn or destroyed. In return, the United States would end the blockade and agree not to invade Cuba. And Khrushchev again asked Kennedy not to interfere with the Soviet ships. Then came these emotional, eloquent, and sensible words:

. . . If you have not lost your self-control and sensibly conceive what this might lead to, then, Mr. President, we and you ought not to pull on the ends of the rope in which you have tied the knot of war, because the more the two of us pull, the tighter that knot will be tied. And a moment may come when that knot will be tied so tight that even he who tied it will not have the strength to untie it, and then it will be necessary to cut that knot, and what that would mean is not for me to explain to you, because you yourself understand perfectly of what terrible forces our countries dispose. Consequently, if there is no intention to tighten that knot, and thereby doom the world to the catastrophe of thermonuclear war, then let us not only relax the forces pulling on the ends of the rope, let us take measures to untie that knot. We are ready for this.

When the crisis was over a few days later, most of the world agreed that Kennedy had won a great victory by outbluffing Khrushchev, but a reading of the paragraph above and a less chauvinistic view of the facts can lead to another conclusion. True, it was Khrushchev who backed away from nuclear confrontation, but unless *machismo* is to be the ultimate standard of statesmanship, it was Khrushchev who sacrificed pride to avoid nuclear war and it was Kennedy who was pushing the world to the brink of the catastrophe that has been man's dread since the mushroom cloud spread over Hiroshima a generation before. Nor was Khrushchev's action the surrender that it has been pictured. Even *in extremis* Russia refused to accept the blockade, shot down a U-2 over Cuba, and insisted that Kennedy pledge not to invade Cuba. One of Khrushchev's major reasons was certainly to defend that threatened island. In that he succeeded entirely and, as we shall see, he

received even more. Khrushchev, despite the popular view, did not cave in; he held out for—and got—a reasonable settlement.

On that Friday night Kennedy and his advisers went to bed with an enormous sense of relief. For the first time in eleven nights the threat of nuclear war did not hang over them. But the next morning they concluded that the crisis was still on—and more dangerous than ever. On Saturday morning, when the ExCom convened, there was a new letter from Khrushchev, one obviously the product of the Russian Foreign Office. It was quite different from the Premier's personal letter: "We will remove our missiles from Cuba, you will remove yours from Turkey. . . . The Soviet Union will pledge not to invade or interfere with the internal affairs of Turkey; the United States to make the same pledge regarding Cuba."<sup>47</sup>

All those close to the situation have written that the crisis thereby went into, as Robert Kennedy put it, its "most difficult twenty-four hours." "To add to the feeling of foreboding and gloom, Secretary McNamara reported increased evidence that the Russians in Cuba were now working day and night, intensifying their efforts on all the missile sites." Perhaps the tension and exhaustion of the previous days caused the ExCom to take so pessimistic a view, for in retrospect it is difficult to see what else could have caused it. Even if Khrushchev had stiffened his offer somewhat, "the fact was," Robert Kennedy observed, "the proposal the Russians made was not unreasonable and did not amount to a loss to the United States or to our NATO allies."<sup>48</sup> Indeed, the President had directly ordered several months earlier that the Jupiter missiles be removed from Turkey and Italy because they were obsolescent. But his orders had not been carried out because Turkey was reluctant, possibly for economic reasons (a big American payroll was involved) to have them removed. Once again Kennedy found himself hung up on the concept of American honor. He did not want to risk nuclear war for missiles that were no longer of any real military value, but he shared the general view of the ExCom that to remove them now under Russian pressure would undermine the faith of the NATO alliance in America's word. Then there were those Congressional elections just a few days off. What political capital the Republicans would make of Kennedy's "surrender"! The ExCom sought unsuccessfully to

find some formula by which the Turkish missiles could be removed without appearing that the United States was giving way to Soviet pressure. Alarm was heightened when it received the bad news that antiaircraft fire, presumably a Russian SAM, had shot down an American U-2 pilot, Major Rudolf Anderson, Jr., one of the two pilots whose mission on October 14 had first disclosed the presence of the Soviet missiles.

There was certainly just cause to mourn the death of a brave man who had performed such a great service, but the fact was that there was no reason for the Russians and the Cubans to stop their military preparations until Khrushchev learned whether or not Kennedy would accept his proposals. Indeed, there was good reason to continue them, for if Kennedy did not accept, the likelihood was that the crisis would intensify, with the possibility, even the probability, that the Americans would take military action. In any case, it was clear by now that the Russians would not initiate military action but would only respond to American moves. But Washington did not see things that way.

Then Robert Kennedy had a brilliant idea, one that contributed signally to the sudden end of the crisis. Ignoring the speculation about the second Khrushchev note—that he had changed his mind, or that the hard-liners in the Kremlin had taken over or had forced Khrushchev to take a tougher position—the President's brother suggested replying to the first, more acceptable letter, and ignoring the second. It is possible that the second letter was actually first but had been delayed in the bureaucratic machinery so that it was overtaken by Khrushchev's personal message.

The President agreed and sent this message:

I have read your letter of October 26th with great care and welcomed the statement of your desire to seek a prompt solution to the problem. The first thing that needs to be done, however, is for work to cease on offensive missile bases in Cuba and for all weapons systems in Cuba capable of offensive use to be rendered inoperable, under effective United Nations arrangements.

Assuming this is done promptly, I have given my representatives in New York instructions that will permit them to work out this weekend—in cooperation with the Acting Secretary General and your representative—an arrangement for a permanent solution to the Cuba problem along the lines suggested in your letter of Octo-

ber 26th. As I read your letter, the key elements of your proposals—which seem generally acceptable—are as follows:

1. You would agree to remove these weapons systems from Cuba under appropriate United Nations observation and supervision; and undertake, with suitable safeguards, to halt the further introduction of such weapons systems into Cuba.

2. We, on our part, would agree—upon the establishment of adequate arrangements through the United Nations to ensure the carrying out and continuation of these commitments—(a) to remove promptly the quarantine measures now in effect and (b) to give assurances against an invasion of Cuba. I am confident that other nations of the Western Hemisphere would be prepared to do likewise.

If you will give your representative similar instructions, there is no reason why we should not be able to complete these arrangements and announce them to the world within a couple of days. The effect of such a settlement on easing world tension would enable us to work toward a more general arrangement regarding "other armaments" as proposed in your second letter which you made public. I would like to say again that the United States is very much interested in reducing tensions and halting the arms race; and if your letter signifies that you are prepared to discuss a détente affecting NATO and the Warsaw Pact, we are quite prepared to consider with our allies any useful proposals.

But the first ingredient, let me emphasize, is the cessation of work on missile sites in Cuba and measures to render such weapons inoperable, under effective international guarantees. The continuation of this threat, or a prolonging of this discussion concerning Cuba by linking these questions to the broader questions of European and world security, would surely lead to an intensification of the Cuban crisis and a grave risk to the peace of the world. For this reason I hope we can quickly agree along the lines outlined in this letter and in your letter of October 26th.<sup>49</sup>

Notice that without mentioning Turkey, Kennedy, in the last paragraph, excludes it from the deal. This—publicly—satisfied the American concept of honor, that it must never seem to respond to pressure, and it is this public firmness that contributed to the general assessment that Khrushchev backed down. Yet when Robert Kennedy delivered the letter to Ambassador Dobrynin at a Saturday-night meeting in the Justice Department, the question of Turkey was raised by the Russian. This was Robert Kennedy's reply:

. . . 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 Turkey and Italy 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.<sup>50</sup>

There is no way to disguise the fact that this, however informal, was a *quid pro quo*, and no doubt the anxious Dobrynin evaluated it as such in his cable to Moscow. And the fact is that a few months later the Jupiter missiles were quietly removed from Turkey and Italy. Stevenson, despite having been castigated as a “dove”—it was in this controversy that the terms “dove” and “hawk” were born—was right, and Khrushchev did get all he asked for in the second, stiffer letter: an end to the blockade, a pledge guaranteeing Cuba’s safety, and the removal of the Jupiter missiles. Since the recognition of this would diminish Kennedy’s “triumph,” his admirers have understandably skirted this point.

Yet despite President Kennedy’s acceptance of Khrushchev’s proposal, the crisis was not over. When the news came that Major Anderson had been shot down,

At first, there was almost unanimous agreement that we had to attack early the next morning with bombers and fighters and destroy the SAM sites. But again the President pulled everyone back. “It isn’t the first step that concerns me,” he said, “but both sides escalating to the fourth and fifth step—and we don’t go to the sixth because there is no one around to do so. We must remind ourselves that we are embarking on a very hazardous course.”<sup>51</sup>

Despite this sensible concern, there is complete agreement by those close to the situation that Kennedy was on the very edge of a decision to increase the military pressure on the Russians, with measures ranging from broadening the blockade to include non-military goods to an air strike and an invasion. Although no one can say how the Russians would have responded, obviously any of these steps risked a military response with the gravest danger of escalation to nuclear war. With the elements of a peaceful solution right at hand, Kennedy was both increasing the pressure and de-

manding an immediate reply. This was neither sensible nor prudent; it jeopardized at terrible risk the very agreement that mutual concessions had made possible. No one was closer to the situation than Robert Kennedy. This was what he told Ambassador Dobrynin that Saturday night. They are chilling words.

. . . 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. . . . 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. . . .

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 this 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.<sup>52</sup>

This did not make sense. Kennedy had just agreed to Khrushchev’s proposals, and it was just a matter of time, a day or so perhaps, before the crisis was to be resolved peacefully, yet the United States was issuing what, despite Robert Kennedy’s words, was another ultimatum. Why could not the President’s brother have conveyed the President’s message, added the concession on Turkey that made agreement even more certain, and confined himself to an urgent but friendly hope that the issue could be swiftly resolved?

When the Attorney General returned to the White House, he and the President were pessimistic. The President ordered to active duty twenty-four Air Force troop-carrier squadrons to be ready for an invasion. He “had not abandoned hope, but what hope there was now rested with Khrushchev’s revising his course within the next few hours. It was a hope, not an expectation. The expectation was a military confrontation by Tuesday and possibly tomorrow. . . .”<sup>53</sup> Or, as Roger Hilsman put it, “. . . an actual

invasion of Cuba might be no later than forty-eight hours away." 54

This did not make sense either. With agreement, by any reasonable expectation, only a day or so away, Kennedy was preparing, by military action, to pull that knot "so tight that even he who tied it will not have the strength to untie it, and then it will be necessary to cut that knot, and what that would mean is not for me to explain to you, because you yourself understand perfectly of what terrible forces our countries dispose." Kennedy was in such a hurry that he seemed prepared to jeopardize everything. One can only assume that continued tension and exhaustion caused such behavior, for there was no need for Khrushchev to revise his course: he had already offered and Kennedy had accepted a reasonable proposal. One can only believe that Kennedy would have seen the folly of pulling the knot tighter if Khrushchev had delayed for a day or so.

Fortunately, Khrushchev was not provoked by the Attorney General's language; perhaps he was under similar pressure himself and understood how extreme tension affected even brave and calm men. On Sunday, October 28, the welcome words came from the Kremlin, broadcast by Radio Moscow to save time: Khrushchev had accepted Kennedy's understanding of his proposals. The missiles would be removed and no more sent, with the United States, for its part, to end the blockade and guarantee Cuba's territorial integrity.<sup>55</sup> The crisis was over.

It took a few months, however, to tie up the loose ends. Castro, perhaps angered because he had been so largely ignored, refused to allow United Nations observers into Cuba, despite a flying trip to Havana by U Thant. But that difficulty was overcome by Russia's, and Cuba's, tacit agreement to let American U-2s serve to verify that the sites were dismantled and the missiles shipped back to the Soviet Union. However, the Soviet Union and Cuba argued that the IL-28 bombers should not be included in the deal; the United States, largely for political reasons, insisted, and Khrushchev eventually gave in. It is interesting that an entire decade later that kind of semantic debate continued. In early 1971, during the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks, the Soviet Union insisted that American fighter-bombers in Western Europe capable of carrying nuclear bombs be included within the scope of the talks.

The United States, however, argued that such bombers should not be included since their sole purpose was to "defend" NATO countries. The question had not been resolved at this writing and, in general terms, it probably never will be, for it is always the other side's weapons that are offensive.

What finally can be said about the Cuban missile crisis? First, it is obvious that both Khrushchev and Kennedy made serious miscalculations. Although Khrushchev was entirely justified by international law in sending the missiles to Cuba, he was not justified by a more important law, common sense. He should have known that no American President could permit such a thing even if, as was the case, the missiles did not materially change the military balance of power. Although Khrushchev and Castro did have legitimate fears of American hostility, Khrushchev could have protected Cuba by less extreme means. He could have made a public pledge that an attack on Cuba would be regarded as an attack on the Soviet Union, or he could have sent a limited force of Russian soldiers to serve as a trip-wire, as American troops did in Western Europe. There might well have been other measures short of sending missiles.

But if Khrushchev's move was reckless, Kennedy's response was even more so. Granted that political realities made it necessary for Kennedy to rid Cuba of the missiles, he could have done it diplomatically. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that, as with Berlin, he deliberately built up the crisis, possibly to influence the elections, possibly to force the showdown with Khrushchev that he had long thought might be necessary. He gambled when there were too many unpredictable things that could have gone fatally wrong. His public and surprise ultimatum to Khrushchev risked nuclear war and, because it was wholly unnecessary, risked it to a degree beyond forgiveness. Clearly, however great his reluctance, Kennedy did seem, on the evidence of his friends, more willing than Khrushchev to take that last fatal step. One can only wonder, if their roles had been reversed, if Kennedy would have been able to accept public humiliation as the cost of avoiding nuclear war. For there is no doubt that in the eyes of much of the world, however unwarranted such a conclusion, Khrushchev was humiliated and Kennedy was triumphant. This despite the fact, as historians will surely note, that Khrushchev got all he had asked for in his

"second," tougher message: an end to the blockade, the removal of American missiles from Turkey and Italy, and a guarantee of Cuban security. When the crisis was over, the status quo with Cuba no longer existed. It is true that there were no Soviet missiles in Cuba, but there were none there before. In this regard, no change; but before the crisis, Cuba's safety was not assured; after the crisis, it was. History will decide who, in tangible terms, gained the most. And even Kennedy's public triumph at the cost of Khrushchev's humiliation may have been as hollow as it was illusory. This humiliation, or the appearance of it, may well have contributed to Khrushchev's overthrow two years later. It is difficult for an American to know what Khrushchev's ouster meant to the people of the Soviet Union, but it did mean the loss of a man who, despite his failings, despite his foolish behavior in sending missiles to Cuba, genuinely sought the American-Soviet détente essential to world peace, and sought it with more imagination and purpose than did his successors. But what might have been, had Kennedy lived, had Khrushchev remained in power, can never be known. What was observable, however, was the move toward détente that followed the sobering missile crisis; but again the situation is not as simple as it once appeared.

As for the missile crisis itself, the reader must judge for himself whether Kennedy was prudent or reckless. Perhaps the standard for prudent behavior was best expressed by Kennedy himself.

. . . Above all, while defending our own vital interests, nuclear powers must avert those confrontations which bring an adversary to a choice of either a humiliating retreat or a nuclear war. To adopt that kind of course in the nuclear age would be evidence only of the bankruptcy of our policy—or of a collective death-wish for the world.<sup>56</sup>

John Kennedy believed that his course during the Cuban missile crisis conformed to this essential standard. I disagree.

Chapter Six: *Nuclear Testing*

1. Sorensen, op. cit., p. 26.
2. Kennedy, *Strategy*, p. 45.
3. Sorensen, op. cit., p. 618.
4. Schlesinger, op. cit., p. 454.
5. Kennedy, *Public Papers*, 1961, p. 693.
6. Horowitz, op. cit., p. 371.
7. Schlesinger, op. cit., p. 488.
8. Ibid., p. 496.
9. Ibid., p. 497.
10. Kennedy, *Public Papers*, 1962, p. 591.
11. Ibid., p. 644.
12. Ibid., p. 649.

Chapter Seven: *The Cuban Missile Crisis*

1. Sorensen, op. cit., p. 717.
2. Schlesinger, op. cit., p. 840.
3. David L. Larson, ed., *The Cuban Crisis of 1962* (Boston, 1963), p. 299. This contains a valuable collection of documents and a useful chronology.
4. Kennedy, *Public Papers*, 1961, p. 304.
5. For this account I am indebted to the Larson chronology.
6. See Schlesinger, op. cit., p. 783.
7. Elie Abel, *The Missile Crisis* (New York, 1966), p. 18.
8. Kennedy, *Public Papers*, 1962, p. 652.
9. Abel, op. cit., p. 19.
10. See Henry Pachter, *Collision Course* (New York, 1963). Abel's and Pachter's are very informative studies of the missile crisis. I have relied on both.
11. Department of State *Bulletin*, XLVII, No. 1213 (September 24, 1962), 450.
12. *The New York Times*, September 8, 1962, p. 2.
13. Kennedy, *Public Papers*, 1962, p. 665.
14. *The New York Times*, September 12, 1962, p. 16.
15. Department of State *Bulletin*, XLVII, No. 1220 (November 12, 1962), 734. Roger Hilsman mentions the passage quoted by Stevenson but does not discuss its significance.
16. Larson, op. cit., pp. 83, 103.
17. Department of State *Bulletin*, XLVII, No. 1219 (November 5, 1962), 706-708.
18. Schlesinger, op. cit., p. 391.
19. There are numerous accounts of those tense thirteen days and, since they substantially agree, there is little reason to doubt their essential accuracy. My account of the events—as distinguished from interpretation and conclusion—is based upon them. See Schlesinger, Sorensen, Salinger, Hilsman, Abel, Pachter, Horowitz, and most interestingly, Robert Kennedy.

20. Sorensen, op. cit., p. 696.
21. *The New York Times Book Review*, January 24, 1971, p. 28.
22. Yarmolinsky, op. cit.
23. Stevenson's role in both the Kennedy and Johnson administrations is the subject of my book *The Remnants of Power*.
24. Hilsman, op. cit., p. 198.
25. Sorensen, op. cit., p. 676.
26. Ibid., p. 678.
27. *The New York Times*, November 12, 1962.
28. Kennedy, *Public Papers*, 1962, p. 898.
29. Hilsman, op. cit., p. 199.
30. Schlesinger, op. cit., p. 803.
31. Sorensen, op. cit., p. 684.
32. Kennedy, *Public Papers*, 1962, pp. 806-809.
33. Robert Kennedy, op. cit., p. 62.
34. Ibid., p. 80.
35. The United Nations aspect of the crisis is covered in detail in my book *The Remnants of Power*.
36. United Nations Document S/PV 1025.
37. A. G. Mezerik, *Cuba and the United States* (New York, 1963), p. 143. This and other International Review Service publications contain invaluable chronologies and documents on international affairs.
38. Kennedy, *Public Papers*, 1962, p. 811.
39. Cited in Schlesinger, op. cit., p. 817.
40. Cited in Abel, op. cit., p. 144.
41. United Nations Press Release SG/1357, October 26, 1962, pp. 1-2.
42. United Nations Press Release SG/1358, October 26, 1962, pp. 1-2.
43. United Nations Press Release SG/1357, October 26, 1962, pp. 2-3.
44. United Nations Press Release SG/1358, October 26, 1962, pp. 2-3.
45. Robert Kennedy, op. cit., p. 86.
46. The direct quotations are from *ibid.* A larger proportion of the Khrushchev letter is carried in paraphrase in Abel, op. cit., pp. 180-86.
47. Robert Kennedy, op. cit., p. 94.
48. Ibid.
49. Kennedy, *Public Papers*, 1962, p. 813.
50. Robert Kennedy, op. cit., p. 108.
51. Ibid., p. 98.
52. Ibid., p. 109.
53. Ibid.
54. Hilsman, op. cit., p. 221.
55. See Mezerik, op. cit., p. 149.
56. Kennedy, *Public Papers*, 1963, p. 462.

Chapter Eight: *Détente*

1. Sorensen, op. cit., p. 745.
2. Ibid., p. 727.