THIRTEEN DAYS

BY ROBERT F. KENNEDY

THE STORY ABOUT HOW THE WORLD ALMOST ENDED

RIALS

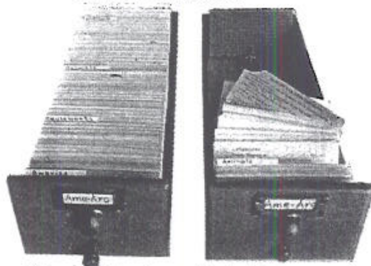
classrooms. And most parents suspect that reading is vital in the educational life of their boys and girls.

Since your child learns to read by reading, you should be interested in answers to these questions: Does he have a chance to read for enrichment in his elementary school? Is there a library in his school? Does his daily schedule allow him to go to the library? May he draw out books to take home? Is there a trained librarian in charge? Is there a plentiful supply of good books and magazines for his use?

If you find that the answer to any of these questions is no, more explicit questions follow: If reading is so important to a child, why no library? Have school officials asked for funds for library services? Are you willing to pay for such services as a taxpayer if requested to do so?

In the spring of 1968, I traveled about 7,000 miles, visiting elementary schools in the upper Midwest. My travels took me to no ghettos, to no blighted areas of racial or economic discrimination. This was lush and abundant, largely white, rural mid-America. Here were beautiful and prosperous-appearing farms, bustling small and middle-size towns, handsome and expanding suburban districts.

In the midst of this apparent economic plenty, however, I found appalling and shocking cases of a different type of discrimination. Children are not treated equally in the schools provided for them. Some are blessed; some are deprived. And a matter of only a few miles within the same area of the same state may separate the chosen children from the neglected children.



This condition is particularly apparent as one looks at, or for, libraries and reading opportunities for children in the schools.

For the first-class-citizen child there are inviting, bright, cheerful, and spacious libraries, bulging with attractive books and magazines, easily accessible on low and convenient shelves. The library room is centrally located in the building, and, as frequently as daily, his schedule allows and urges him to experience its offerings. With the help of trained experts, he explores the worlds opened to him in the pages of these friends. He takes them home with him easily and with increasing appreciation and respect. The master skill—reading—is being acquired.

PHOTOGRAPH BY LEN WEISS

For the second-class-citizen child no such opportunities exist. There are far too many elementary schools with no library area of any kind in the building and only a meager supply of books in the classrooms. Token, futile, and shameful gestures are made in other schools to claim a library exists. Dark and dirty alcoves, segments of dusty corridors, gloomy unused storerooms, and hastily partitioned-off anterooms are dignified by the name of school library. Four or five oversize chairs, an abandoned table, and orange-crate shelves housing a few torn and senile travesties for books generally create the learning atmosphere in these cases. Children's schedules likely do not permit or encourage visits to these catacombs. Perhaps it is a wise precaution. It may help preserve any faint belief children may have that reading can be exciting and fun.

Children cannot do much about this situation, but they may ask questions later. Parents are advised to ask questions now.

Dr. Glaydon D. Robbins
Dean of Education, Moorhead State College

WHO WILL SAVE OUR CITIES?

These days, when our cities are beset by so many serious problems—economic, social, racial, technological, conservational—I detect a note of impatience in many people to whom I talk. Democracy, they imply, is too slow. What is needed to rescue our cities, they suggest, is some kind of savior—a super city planner with the moral persuasiveness of a pope and the power of an emperor, who will inspire us all to rebuild our cities and make local heads roll if we fail to do so. I sympathize with the impatience—but I am sure the "solution" is wrong.

My personal experience in dealing with all types of government in several parts of the world—from autocratic to democratic, from capitalistic to Communistic—leads me to believe that we do not need autocratic power to build better cities. On the contrary, such power may very easily lead to worse cities.

An autocratic government or an all-powerful planning czar certainly has the facility of preparing new plans and programs more easily than the slow-moving city councils that run a democratic system. But the powerful saviors are also in great danger of making the wrong decisions because of the absence of a dialogue that alone can illuminate the very complex problems we are facing in our cities—problems for which we need the advice of all the citizens.

In the U.S.S.R. under the leadership of Khrushchev, the principle was established by the ruling planners that the Soviet citizen was not going to need a private car. Therefore it was not necessary to provide for streets and highways and parking facilities for private vehicles. What will happen now that the new Russian government intends to give its citizens cars? The cities will be out of gear.

The future of our cities is too important to be decided by only a few. In this area more than anywhere else, we need the opinion of all who are intimately concerned with that future.

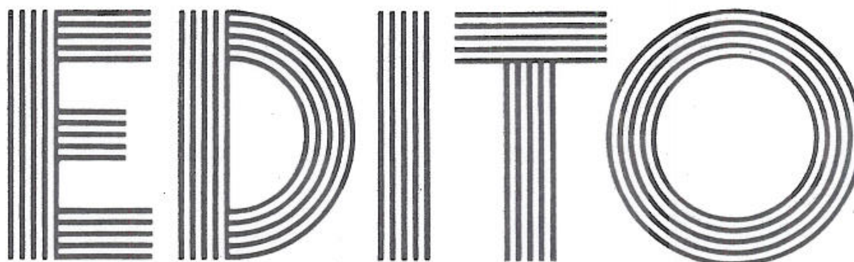
Yes, the change is slow, and it must be faster. We must organize our urban system better, in order to operate in a rational way at the right speed. But, even today, when the slow process of decision making ends—when there have been reports and surveys, referendums and amendments, votes in subcommittees and committees of the whole—the community is educated to the innovations and so committed to them that no one official can easily reverse the decision. Autocratic governments and administrators may change their minds overnight; stubborn democratic majorities are fortunately hard to budge.

Of course, we desperately need the expertise of the experts and the wisdom of inspired leaders. But we also need the continuing interest and efforts of mayors or councilmen, executives or technical experts, leading businessmen, scientists, and just plain citizens.

Who will save our cities? By electing the right leaders, developing the right policies, and using the right people, you will, if you wish to.

Constantinos A. Doxiadis

The foregoing editorial by the distinguished Greek architect and city planner is an expansion of remarks quoted in McCall's special issue on "Women and the Future" (March, 1968). Because of space limitations, we were unable at that time to report his views in full. We are pleased to be able to do so now. *—The Editors*

McCall's 

RFK'S "THIRTEEN DAYS"

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Robert Kennedy's book begins on page 6 of this issue.*

On September 11, 1968, the McCall Corporation, publisher of *McCall's, Redbook,* and *Saturday Review,* was informed by Mr. Theodore C. Sorensen, former aide and consultant to President John F. Kennedy and Senator Robert F. Kennedy, that he was authorized to arrange for publication of a personal memoir by Senator Kennedy on the Cuban missile crisis of 1962.

We asked to see the manuscript although we had serious reservations. What could be said about the Cuban missile crisis that hadn't already been told—in the books about President Kennedy by his close associates and in the multitude of newspaper and magazine articles on the subject? Just how much relevance could be attached today to an event that occurred six years ago?

We didn't have to read very far into the manuscript before our questions were answered. For it quickly became apparent that we had in our hands one of the most important books to have been written in our time. Indeed, it can be said quite literally that no book like it has ever appeared before. For Robert Kennedy's memoir gives a behind-the-scenes account of the first episode in history when men in power came close to pressing the buttons of world holocaust.

Everyone knows that the United States and the Soviet Union were approaching nuclear war in 1962. What few men know is the incredible inner drama of the event: the intense ordeal of a President who knew he had responsibility for the security of his nation yet also knew he could not ignore his responsibility to more than two billion people who would be affected by his decision; the realization by both President Kennedy and Premier Khrushchev that both countries could vanish in mutual convulsion—but the realization, too, by each man, that the other must not think he was not prepared to go all the way in the defense of his national interests; the ability of President Kennedy to resist strong pressures from his military advisers to take the kind of direct action that would have started the last of the great wars on earth. Through it all emerges a view of a man coming full size as President, a man with moral vision to match his courage, restraint to match his strength, and a sense of human destiny to match his love of country.

This is not all. The book dramatizes the stark fact that it is not enough to crusade for law and order on the streets of the cities; if there is no law and order in the world, there will be no cities. It is not enough to crusade for control over guns in the hands of men; if there is inadequate control over nuclear weapons in the hands of nations, there will be neither nations nor men. The concern over anarchy inside nations will come to nothing unless there is enough concern over anarchy in the world. For none of the triumphs of human intelligence can be sustained unless man is intelligent enough to make a durable peace.

A further note: Robert Kennedy's book cannot be regarded as a sometime thing. It is a charge laid on all Americans. That charge is a composite one. It has something to do with the need, in and out of government, for a vital balance between moral restraint and physical courage; it has to do with the relationship of America to the rest of the world and, especially, with our awareness that, in a very real sense, America must speak for man.

Robert Kennedy often quoted his favorite lines from Aeschylus: "Even in our sleep, pain which cannot forget falls drop by drop upon the heart until, in our own despair, against our will, comes wisdom through the awful grace of God."

The wisdom in young Robert Kennedy's memoir flows out of the pain of events. That wisdom is neither inaccessible nor abstract; it can be put to work in the making of a less painful world in our time.

Norman Cousins
Editor-in-Chief,
McCall Corporation

QUO VADIS, YOUTH?

For students this has been a year of hope, and a year of despair. Having found a few leaders who shared their unalterable opposition to the bombing and continued war in Vietnam, they rallied from everywhere—rich, poor, college, and high school—even from the ranks of the alienated and disillusioned, to involve themselves in the elections. Along the way, two of their heroes were assassinated. At the climactic (and anticlimactic) conventions, they saw the Republicans go the old route of rhetoric and status-quo solutions; they saw the Democrats toeing the established line, putting down mavericks in their ranks, and resorting to shocking violence against student demonstrators. Now, quo vadis—whither, youth?

Will that formerly withdrawn, briefly ignited segment of youth crawl back into its cocoon of cynicism about the system? Will the normally involved students be turned off now by convention chicanery and police brutality? Will those 21- to 29-year-olds, who, of all our population, show the lowest voting interest, feel newly justified in their apathy? There are some young diehards who recognize their gains, but realistically we can expect a large exodus of youth from political involvement. And this, of course, is an unhappy loss—to our nation and to youth itself.

More than ever, America needs the vitamins of youthful ideas and idealism, needs new recruits for leadership in our country. This, then, is a plea and a challenge to youth *not* to drop out because the national picture looks suddenly grimy and invincible, but to shift energies, temporarily, to a new and vital area of operations—the local scene. There, at grass-roots level, young people can make themselves felt immediately. They can infiltrate the party system, so that more and more of the delegates going to the 1972 and the 1976 conventions represent an acceptable and contemporary viewpoint. They can work to elect a Congress they respect and trust. They can speak out on school boards, on housing and other local issues. They can get into positions of strength and power within their communities and parties, so that they may someday take their own places in Washington.

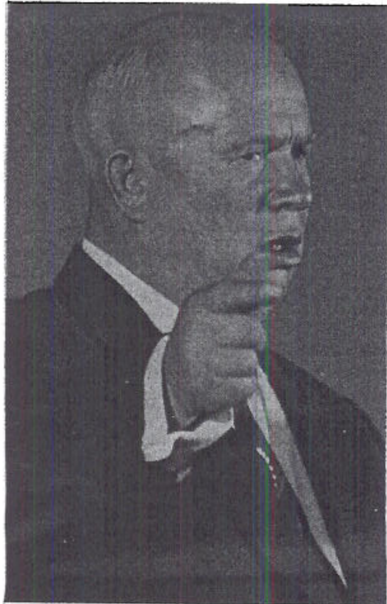
Above all, they must remember that for a brief time they affected politics and their voice was truly heard throughout the land. It was too splendid a start to end in a whimper. Now is not the time to turn off, but to turn on to a new direction as a strategy to future victories.

Sylvie Reice, Youth Editor

SCHOOL LIBRARIES: A STUDY IN INEQUALITY

Reading skill is more or less universally recognized as the basic learning skill for children. Good readers tend to do well in all subjects as long as they are in school. Learning experts have established this truth in innumerable research studies. Teachers are faced with its reality every day in their

Bob Kennedy personally dictated this manuscript in the fall of 1967 on the basis of his personal diaries and recollections but sadly never had an opportunity to rewrite or complete it. At the request of his executors, I have made a number of small corrections for the sake of clarity, structure, and grammar; but the manuscript is also incomplete in a more substantive way. It was Bob Kennedy's intention to add a discussion of the basic ethical question involved: what, if any, circumstances or justification gives this government or any government the moral right to bring its people and possibly all people under the shadow of nuclear destruction? Brinkmanship and bluff are one thing, he mused, and the fact that President Kennedy was not paralyzed by the obvious proportions of his decision deserved even further commendation; but the actual choice of whether, if ever, to destroy one's own nation along with one's enemy raised the profoundest humanitarian issues, which Senator Kennedy hoped to explore further in this manuscript. That he was cruelly prevented from doing so only increases our terrible sense of loss. —Theodore C. Sorensen



On Tuesday morning, October 16, 1962, shortly after nine o'clock, President Kennedy called and asked me to come to the White House. He said only that we were facing great trouble. Shortly afterward, in his office, he told me that a U-2 had just finished a photographic mission and that the Intelligence Community had become convinced that Russia was placing missiles and atomic weapons in Cuba.

That was the beginning of the Cuban missile crisis—a confrontation between the two giant atomic nations, the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., which brought the world to the abyss of nuclear destruction and the end of mankind. From that moment in President Kennedy's office until Sunday morning, October 28, that was my life—and for Americans and Russians, for the whole world, it was their life, as well.

At 11:45 that same morning, in the Cabinet Room, a formal presentation was made by the Central Intelligence Agency to a number of high officials of the government. Photographs were shown to us. Experts arrived with their charts and their pointers and told us that if we looked carefully, we could see there was a missile base being constructed in a field near San Cristobal, Cuba. I, for one, had to take their word for it. I examined the pictures carefully, and what I saw appeared to be no more than the clearing of a field for a farm or the basement of a house. I was relieved to hear later that this was the same reaction of virtually everyone at the meeting, including President Kennedy. Even a few days later, when more work had taken place on the site, he remarked that it looked like a football field.

The dominant feeling at the meeting was stunned surprise. No one had expected or anticipated that the Russians would deploy surface-to-surface ballistic missiles in Cuba. I thought back to my meeting with Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin in my office some weeks before. He came to tell me that the Russians were prepared to sign an atmospheric-test-ban treaty if we could make certain agreements on underground testing. I told him I would transmit this message and the accompanying documents to President Kennedy.

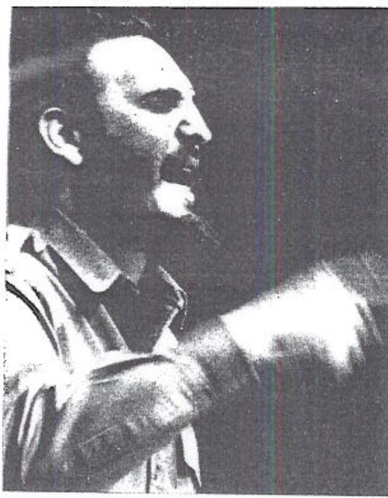
I told him we were deeply concerned within the Administration about the amount of military equipment being sent to Cuba. That very morning, I had met on this subject with the President and the Secretaries of State and Defense. There was some evidence that, in addition to the surface-to-air-missile (SAM) sites that were being erected, the Russians, under the guise of a fishing village, were constructing a large naval shipyard and a base for submarines. This was all being watched carefully—through agents within Cuba who were reporting the military buildup in a limited but frequently important way, through the questioning of refugees who were screened and processed as they arrived in Florida, and through U-2 flights.

It was election time. The autumn days of September and October were filled with charges and countercharges. Republicans "viewing with alarm" were claiming the U.S. was not taking the necessary steps to protect our security. Some, such as Senator Homer E. Capehart, of Indiana, were suggesting that we take military action against Cuba.

I told Ambassador Dobrynin of President Kennedy's deep concern about what was happening. He told me I should not be concerned, for he was instructed by Soviet Chairman Nikita S. Khrushchev to assure President Kennedy that there would be no ground-to-ground missiles or offensive weapons placed in Cuba. Further, he said, I could assure the President that this military buildup was not of any significance and that Khrushchev would do nothing to disrupt the relationship of our two countries during this period prior to the election. Chairman Khrushchev, he said, liked President Kennedy and did not wish to embarrass him.

I pointed out that I felt he had a very strange way of showing his admiration; that what the Russians had been doing in Cuba was a matter of the deepest concern to the United States; and that his protestations of friendship meant little alongside the military activities in the Caribbean. I told him we were watching the buildup carefully and that he should know it would be of the gravest consequence if the Soviet Union placed missiles in Cuba. That would never happen, he assured me, and left.

I reported the conversation to President Kennedy, Secretary of State Dean Rusk, and Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, relayed my own skepticism, and suggested that it might be advisable to issue a statement making it unequivocally clear that the U.S. would not tolerate the



Fidel Castro

General Maxwell Taylor; Robert McNamara

McGeorge Bundy

Dean Rusk

introduction of offensive surface-to-surface missiles, or offensive weapons of any kind, into Cuba.

That same afternoon, September 4, from a draft prepared by Nicholas Katzenbach, the Deputy Attorney General, and myself, the President issued exactly this kind of warning and pointed out the serious consequences that would result from such a step.

A week later, on September 11, Moscow disclaimed publicly any intention of taking such action and stated that there was no need for nuclear missiles to be transferred to any country outside the Soviet Union, including Cuba.

During this same period of time, an important official in the Soviet Embassy, returning from Moscow, brought me a personal message from Khrushchev to President Kennedy, stating that he wanted the President to be assured that under no circumstances would surface-to-surface missiles be sent to Cuba.

Now, as the representatives of the CIA explained the U-2 photographs that morning, Tuesday, October 16, we realized that it had all been lies, one gigantic fabric of lies. The Russians were putting missiles in Cuba, and they had been shipping them there and beginning the construction of the sites at the same time those various private and public assurances were being forwarded by Chairman Khrushchev to President Kennedy.

Thus the dominant feeling was one of shocked incredulity. We had been deceived by Khrushchev, but we had also fooled ourselves. No official within the government had ever suggested to President Kennedy that the Russian buildup in Cuba would include missiles. On a number of occasions, the President had asked for a specific evaluation on what the Intelligence Community felt to be the implications for the U.S. of that buildup. The Intelligence Community, in its National Estimate of the future course of events, had advised him—on each of the four occasions in 1962 when they furnished him with official reports on Cuba and the Caribbean—that the Russians would not make offensive weapons available to Cuba. The last estimate before our meeting of the 16th of October was dated the 19th of September, and it advised the President that without reservation the United States Intelligence Board, after considerable discussion and examination, had concluded that the Soviet Union would not make Cuba a strategic base. It pointed out that the Soviet Union had not taken this kind of step with any of its satellites in the past and would feel the risk of retaliation from the United States to be too great to take the risk in this case.

We heard later, in a postmortem study, that reports had come from agents within Cuba indicating the presence of missiles in September of 1962. Most of the reports were false; some were the result of confusion by untrained observers between surface-to-air missiles and surface-to-surface missiles. Several reports, however, turned out to be accurate—one from a former employee at the Hilton Hotel, in Havana, who believed a missile installation was being constructed near San Cristobal, and another from someone who overheard Premier Fidel Castro's pilot talking in a boastful and intoxicated way one evening about the nuclear missiles that were going to be furnished Cuba by Russia.

But before these reports were given substance, they had to be checked and rechecked. They were not even considered substantial enough to pass on to the President or other high officials within the government. In retrospect, this was perhaps a mistake. But the same postmortem study also stated that there was no action the U.S. could have taken before the time we actually did act, on the grounds that even the films available on October 16 would not have been substantial enough to convince the governments and peoples of the world of the presence of offensive missiles in Cuba. Certainly, unsubstantiated refugee reports would not have been sufficient.

The important fact, of course, is that the missiles were uncovered and the information was made available to the government and the people before the missiles became operative and in time for the U.S. to act.

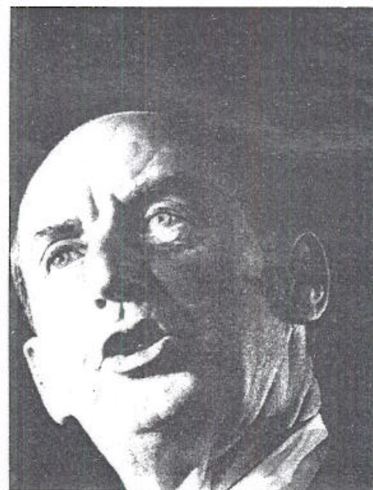
The same group that met that first morning in the Cabinet Room met almost continuously through the next twelve days and almost daily for some six weeks thereafter. Others in the group, which was later to be called the "Ex-Comm" (the Executive Committee of the National Security Council), included Secretary of State Dean Rusk; Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara; Director of the Central Intelligence Agency John McCone; Secretary of the Treasury Douglas Dillon; President Kennedy's adviser on national-security affairs, McGeorge Bundy; Presidential Counsel Theodore C. Sorensen; Under Secretary of State George Ball; Deputy Under Secretary of State U. Alexis Johnson; General Maxwell Taylor, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Edward Martin, Assistant Secretary of State for Latin America; originally, Charles Bohlen, who, after the first day, left to become Ambassador to France and was succeeded by Llewelyn Thompson as the adviser on Russian affairs; Roswell Gilpatric, Deputy Secretary of Defense; Paul Nitze, Assistant Secretary of Defense; and, intermittently at various meetings, Vice-President Lyndon B. Johnson; Adlai Stevenson, Ambassador to the United Nations; Kenneth O'Donnell, Special Assistant to the President; and Donald Wilson, who was Deputy Director of the United States Information Agency. This was the group that met, talked, argued, and fought together during that crucial period of time. From this group came the recommendations from which President Kennedy was ultimately to select his course of action.

They were men of the highest intelligence, industrious, courageous, and dedicated to their country's well-being. It is no reflection on them that none was consistent in his opinion from the very beginning to the very end. That kind of open, unfettered mind was essential. For some there were only small changes, perhaps varieties of a single idea. For others there were continuous changes of opinion each day; some, because of the pressure of events, even appeared to lose their judgment and stability.

The general feeling in the beginning was that some form of action was required. There were those, although they were a small minority, who felt the missiles did not alter the balance of power and therefore necessitated no action. Most felt, at that stage, that an air strike against the missile sites could be the only course. Listening to the proposals, I passed a note to the President: "I now know how Tojo felt when he was planning Pearl Harbor."

PHOTOGRAPHS FROM BLACK STAR, PIX, MAGNUM, UPI

At stake in their arguments: the future of mankind



Andrei Gromyko
Anatoly Dobrynin

Theodore C. Sorensen

George Ball

Adlai Stevenson

After the meeting in the Cabinet Room, I walked back to the Mansion with the President. It would be difficult; the stakes were high—of the highest and most substantial kind—but he knew he would have to act. The U.S. could not accept what the Russians had done. What that action would be was still to be determined. But he was convinced from the beginning that he would have to do something. To keep the discussions from being inhibited and because he did not want to arouse attention, he decided not to attend all the meetings of our committee. This was wise. Personalities change when the President is present, and frequently even strong men make recommendations on the basis of what they believe the President wishes to hear. He instructed our group to come forward with recommendations for one course or possibly several alternative courses of action.

It was during the afternoon and evening of that first day, Tuesday, that we began to discuss the idea of a quarantine or blockade. Secretary McNamara, by Wednesday, became the blockade's strongest advocate. He argued that it was limited pressure, which could be increased as the circumstances warranted. Further, it was dramatic and forceful pressure, which would be understood yet, most importantly, still leave us in control of events. Later he reinforced his position by reporting that a surprise air strike against the missile bases alone—a surgical air strike, as it came to be called—was militarily impractical in the view of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, that any such military action would have to include all military installations in Cuba, eventually leading to an invasion. Perhaps we would come to that, he argued. Perhaps that course of action would turn out to be inevitable. "But let's not start with that course," if by chance that kind of confrontation with Cuba, and of necessity with the Soviet Union, could be avoided.

Those who argued for the military strike instead of a blockade pointed out that a blockade would not in fact remove the missiles and would not even stop the work from going ahead on the missile sites themselves. The missiles were already in Cuba, and all we would be doing with a blockade would be "closing the door after the horse had left the barn." Further, they argued, we would be bringing about a confrontation with the Soviet Union by stopping their ships, when we should be concentrating on Cuba and Castro.

Their most forceful argument was that our installation of a blockade around Cuba invited the Russians to do the same to Berlin. If we demanded the removal of missiles from Cuba as the price for lifting our blockade, they would demand the removal of missiles surrounding the Soviet Union as the reciprocal act.

And so we argued, and so we disagreed—all dedicated, intelligent men, disagreeing and fighting about the future of their country, and of mankind. Meanwhile, time was slowly running out.

An examination of photography taken on Wednesday, the 17th of October, showed several other installations, with at least 16 and possibly 32 missiles of over 1,000-mile range. Our military experts advised that these missiles could be in operation within a week. The next day, Thursday, estimates by our Intelligence Community placed in Cuba missiles with an atomic-warhead potential of about one half the current ICBM capacity of the entire Soviet Union. The photography having indicated that the missiles were being directed at certain American cities, the estimate was that within a few minutes of their being fired 80 million Americans would be dead.

The members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff were unanimous in calling for immediate military action. They forcefully presented their view that the blockade would not be effective. General Curtis LeMay, Air Force Chief of Staff, argued strongly with the President that a military attack was essential. When the President questioned what the response of the Russians might be, General LeMay assured him there would be no reaction. President Kennedy was skeptical. "They, no more than we, can let these things go by without doing something. They can't, after all their statements, permit us to take out their missiles, kill a lot of Russians, and then do nothing. If they don't take action in Cuba, they certainly will in Berlin."

The President went on to say that he recognized the validity of the arguments made by the Joint Chiefs, the danger that more and more missiles would be placed in Cuba, and the likelihood, if we did nothing, that the Russians would move on Berlin and in other areas of the world, feeling the U.S. was completely impotent. Then it would be too late to do anything in Cuba, for by that time all their missiles would be operational.

General David M. Shoup, Commandant of the Marine Corps, summed up everyone's feelings: "You are in a pretty bad fix, Mr. President." The President answered quickly, "You are in it with me." Everyone laughed, and, with no final decision, the meeting adjourned.

Later, Secretary McNamara, although he told the President he disagreed with the Joint Chiefs and favored a blockade rather than an attack, informed him that the necessary planes, men, and ammunition were being deployed and that we could be ready to move with the necessary air bombardments on Tuesday, October 23, if that was to be the decision. The plans called for an initial attack, consisting of 500 sorties, striking all military targets, including the missile sites, airfields, ports, and gun emplacements.

I supported McNamara's position in favor of a blockade. This was not from a deep conviction that it would be a successful course of action, but a feeling that it had more flexibility and fewer liabilities than a military attack. Most importantly, like others, I could not accept the idea that the United States would rain bombs on Cuba, killing thousands and thousands of civilians in a surprise attack. Maybe the alternatives were not very palatable, but I simply did not see how we could accept that course of action for our country.

Former Secretary of State Dean Acheson began attending our meetings, and he was strongly in favor of an air attack. I was a great admirer of his. In 1961, President Kennedy asked him to prepare a report for the National Security Council recommending a course of action to deal with the Russian threat to Berlin. Listening to his presentation then, I had thought to myself that I had never heard anyone so lucid and convincing and would never wish to / *turn to page 148*

Thirteen days

continued from page 9

be on the other side of an argument with him. Now he made his arguments that an air attack and invasion represented our only alternative in the same clear and brilliant way. He said that the President of the United States had the responsibility for the security of the people of the United States and of the whole free world, that it was his obligation to take the only action which could protect that security, and that that meant destroying the missiles.

With some trepidation, I argued that, whatever validity the military and political arguments were for an attack in preference to a blockade, America's traditions and history would not permit such a course of action. Whatever military reasons he and others could marshal, they were nevertheless, in the last analysis, advocating a surprise attack by a very large nation against a very small one. This, I said, could not be undertaken by the U.S. if we were to maintain our moral position at home and around the globe. Our struggle against Communism throughout the world was far more than physical survival—it had as its essence our heritage and our ideals, and these we must not destroy.

We spent more time on this moral question during the first five days than on any other single matter. At various times, it was proposed that we send a letter to Khrushchev twenty-four hours before the bombardment was to begin, that we send a letter to Castro, that leaflets and pamphlets listing the targets be dropped over Cuba before the attack—all these ideas and more were abandoned for military or other reasons. We struggled and fought with one another and with our consciences, for it was a question that deeply troubled us all.

In the midst of all these discussions, Andrei Gromyko came to see the President. It was an appointment made long before the missiles were uncovered, and the President felt it would be awkward to cancel it. He debated whether he should confront the Soviet Foreign Minister with our knowledge of the missiles' presence and finally decided that, as he had not yet determined a final course of action and the disclosure of our knowledge might give the Russians the initiative, he would simply listen to Gromyko.

They met late Wednesday afternoon in the President's office in the White House. Gromyko began the conversation by saying the United States should stop threatening Cuba. All Cuba wanted was peaceful coexistence, he said; she was not interested in exporting her system to other Latin American countries. Cuba, like the Soviet Union, wanted only peace. Premier Khrushchev had instructed him, Gromyko said, to tell President Kennedy that the only assistance being furnished Cuba was for agriculture and land development, so the people could feed themselves, plus a small amount of defensive arms. In view of all the publicity in the American press, he said, he wanted to emphasize that the Soviet Union would never become involved in the furnishing of offensive weapons to Cuba.

Gromyko said he wished to appeal to the U.S. and to President Kennedy on behalf of Premier Khrushchev and the Soviet Union to lessen the tensions that existed with regard to Cuba.

President Kennedy listened, astonished, but also with some admiration for the boldness of Gromyko's position. Firmly, but with great restraint considering the provocation, he told Gromyko that it was not the United States which was fomenting discord, but the Soviet Union. The U.S.S.R.'s supplying of arms to Cuba was having a profound effect on the people of the United States and was a source of great concern to him. Because of the personal assurances he had received from Khrushchev, he had been taking the public position that no action was required against Cuba, and yet the situation was becoming steadily more dangerous.

Gromyko repeated that the sole objective of the U.S.S.R. was to "give bread to Cuba in order to prevent hunger in that country." As far as arms were concerned, the Soviet Union had simply sent some specialists to train Cubans to handle certain kinds of armament, which were only "defensive." He then said he wished to emphasize the word "defensive" and that none of these weapons could ever constitute a threat to the United States.

The President replied that there should be no misunderstanding of the position of the United States—that that position had been made clear to the Soviet Union in meetings between the Attorney General and Ambassador Dobrynin and in his own public statements. To avoid any misunderstanding, he read aloud his statement of September 4, which pointed out the serious consequences that would arise if the Soviet Union placed missiles or offensive weapons within Cuba.

Gromyko assured him this would never be done, that the United States should not be concerned. After touching briefly on some other matters, he said good-by.

I came by shortly after Gromyko left the White House. The President of the United States, it can be said, was displeased with the spokesman of the Soviet Union....

By Thursday night, there was a majority opinion in our group for a blockade. Our committee went from the State Department to the White House around 9:15 that night. In order to avoid the suspicion that would have ensued from the presence of a long line of limousines, we all went in my car—John McCone, Maxwell Taylor, the driver, and myself all crowded together in the front seat, and six others sitting in back.

We explained our recommendations to the President. At the beginning, the meeting seemed to proceed in an orderly and satisfactory way. However, as people talked, as the President raised probing questions, minds and opinions began to change again, and not only on small points. For some, it was from one extreme to another—supporting an air attack at the beginning of the meeting and, by the time we left the White House, supporting no action at all.

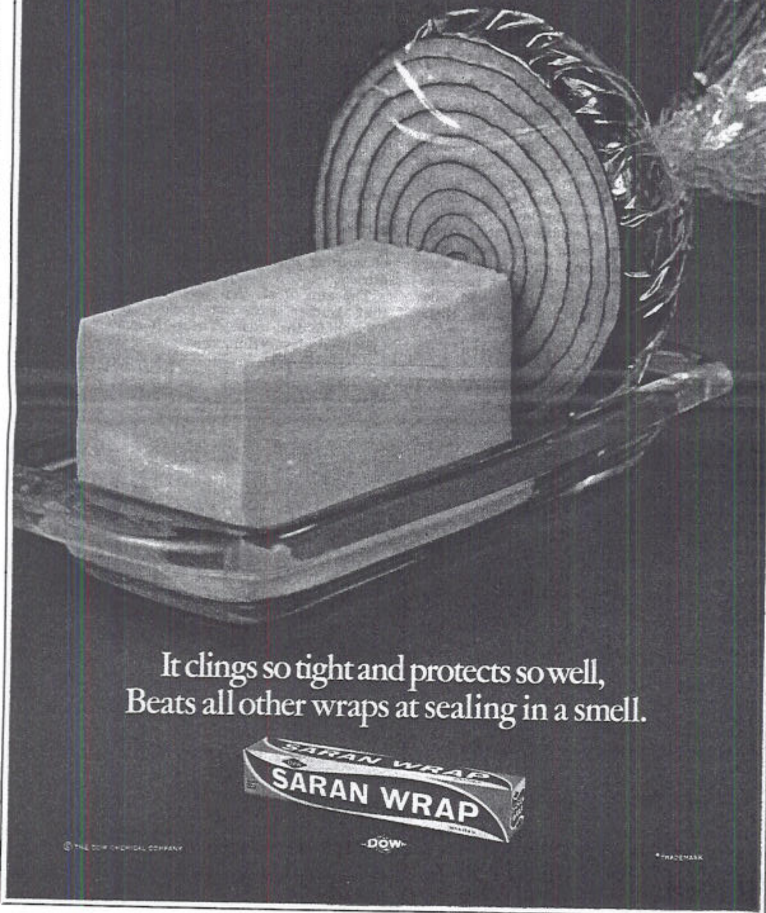
The President, not at all satisfied, sent us back to our deliberations. Because any other step would arouse suspicion, he returned to his regular schedule and his campaign speaking engagements.

The next morning, at our meeting at the State Department, there were sharp disagreements again. The strain and the hours without sleep were beginning to take their toll. However, even many years later, those human weaknesses—impatience, fits of anger—are understandable. Each one of us was being asked to make a recommendation which would affect the future of all mankind, a recommendation which, if wrong and if accepted, could mean the destruction of the human race. That kind of pressure does strange things to a human being, even to brilliant, self-confident, mature, experienced men. For some it brings out characteristics and strengths that perhaps even they never knew they had, and for others the pressure is too overwhelming.

Our situation was made more difficult by the fact that there was no obvious or simple solution. A dogmatism, a certainty of viewpoint, was simply not possible. For every position there were inherent weaknesses; and those opposed would point them out, often with devastating effects.

Finally, we agreed on a procedure by which we felt we could give some intelligent recommendations to the President. We knew that time was running out and that delay was not possible. We split into groups to write up our respective recommendations, beginning with an outline of the President's speech to the nation and the whole course of action thereafter, trying to anticipate all possible contingencies and setting forth recommendations as to how to react to them.

In the early afternoon, we exchanged papers, each group dissected and criticized the other, and then the papers were returned to the original group to develop further answers.



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1. Pour melted butter into shallow baking pan. Stir in Worcestershire sauce and garlic powder.
2. Add Chex and Planters Dry Roasted Peanuts. Mix until all pieces are coated.
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Gradually from all this came the outline of definitive plans. For the group that advocated the blockade, it was an outline of the legal basis for our action, an agenda for a meeting of the Organization of American States, recommendations for the role of the United Nations, the military procedures for stopping ships, and, finally, the circumstances under which military force might be used. For the group that advocated immediate military action, it was an outline of the areas to be attacked, a defense of our position in the United Nations, suggestions as to how to obtain support from Latin American countries, and a proposed communication to Khrushchev to convince him of the inadvisability of moving militarily against us in the Caribbean, Berlin, or elsewhere in the world.

During all these deliberations, we all spoke as equals. There was no rank, and, in fact, we did not even have a chairman. Dean Rusk—who, as Secretary of State, might have assumed that position—had other duties during this period of time and frequently could not attend our meetings. As a result, with the encouragement of McNamara, Bundy, and Ball, the conversations were completely uninhibited and unrestricted. Everyone had an equal opportunity to express himself and to be heard directly. It was a tremendously advantageous procedure that does not frequently occur within the executive branch of the government, where rank is often so important.

We met all day Friday and Friday night. Then again early Saturday morning we were back at the State Department. I talked to the President several times on Friday. He was hoping to be able to meet with us early enough to decide on a course of action and then broadcast it to the nation Sunday night. Saturday morning at 10:00 o'clock I called him at the Blackstone Hotel in Chicago and told him we were ready to meet with him. It was now up to one single man. No committee was going to make this decision. He canceled his trip and returned to Washington.

As he was returning to Washington, our Armed Forces across the world were put on alert. Telephoning from our meeting in the State Department, Secretary McNamara ordered four tactical air squadrons placed at readiness for an air strike, in case the President decided to accept that recommendation.

The President arrived back at the White House at 1:40 P.M. and went for a swim. I sat on the side of the pool, and we talked. At 2:30 we walked up to the Oval Room.

The meeting went on until ten minutes after five. Convened as a formal meeting of the National Security Council, it was a larger group of people who met, some of whom had not participated in the deliberations up to that time. Bob McNamara presented the arguments for the blockade; others presented the arguments for the military attack.

The discussion, for the most part, was able and organized, although, like all meetings of this kind, certain statements were made as accepted truisms, which I, at least, thought were of questionable validity. One member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, for example, argued that we could use nuclear weapons, on the basis that our adversaries would use theirs against us in an attack. I thought, as I listened, of the many times that I had heard the military take positions which, if wrong, had the advantage that no one would be around at the end to know.

The President made his decision that afternoon in favor of the blockade. There was one final meeting the next morning, with General Walter C. Sweeney, Jr., Commander in Chief of the Tactical Air Command, who told the President that even a major surprise air attack could not be certain of destroying all the missile sites and nuclear weapons in Cuba. That ended the small, lingering doubt that might still have remained in his mind. It had worried him that a blockade would not remove the missiles—now it was clear that an attack could not accomplish that task completely, either.

The strongest argument against the all-out military attack, and one no one could answer to his satisfaction, was that a surprise attack would erode if not destroy the moral position of the United States throughout the world.

Adlai Stevenson had come from New York to attend the meeting Saturday afternoon, as he had attended several of the Ex-Comm meetings. He had always been dubious about the air strike, but at the Saturday meeting he strongly advocated what he had only tentatively suggested to me a few days before—namely, that we make it clear to the Soviet Union that if it withdrew its missiles from Cuba, we would be willing to withdraw our missiles from Turkey and Italy and give up our naval base at Guantanamo Bay.

There was an extremely strong reaction from some of the participants *continued on page 150*

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to his suggestion, and several sharp exchanges followed. The President, although he rejected Stevenson's suggestion, pointed out that he had for a long period held reservations about the value of Jupiter missiles in Turkey and Italy and some time ago had asked the State Department to conduct negotiations for their removal; but now, he said, was not the appropriate time to suggest this action, and we could not abandon Guantanamo Bay under threat from the Russians.

Stevenson has since been criticized publicly for the position he took at this meeting. I think it should be emphasized that he was presenting a point of view from a different perspective than the others, one which was therefore important for the President to consider. Although I disagreed strongly with his recommendations, I thought he was courageous to make them, and I might add they made as much sense as some others considered during that period of time.

The President's speech was now scheduled for Monday evening. Under the direction of George Ball, Alex Johnson, and Ed Martin, a detailed hour-to-hour program was arranged, to inform our allies, prepare for the meeting of the OAS, inform the ambassadors stationed in Washington, and prepare for them and others, in written form, the legal justification on which our action was predicated. More and more government officials were brought into the discussions, and finally word began to seep through to the press that a serious crisis was imminent. Through the personal intervention of the President with several newspapers, the only stories written Monday morning were reports that a major speech was to be given by the President and that the country faced a serious crisis.

The diplomatic effort was of great significance. We were able to establish a firm legal foundation for our action under the OAS Charter, and our position around the world was greatly strengthened when the Organization of American States unanimously supported the recommendation for a quarantine. Thus the Soviet Union and Cuba faced the united action of the whole Western Hemisphere. Further, with the support of detailed photographs, Dean Acheson—who obliged the President by once again being willing to help—was able to quickly convince Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, of Great Britain, and French President Charles de Gaulle of the correctness of our response. Macmillan made it clear the U.S. would have his country's support. And in these present days of strain, it is well to remember that no country's leader supported the U.S. more forcefully than did France. General de Gaulle said, "It is exactly what I would have done," adding that it was not necessary to see the photographs, as "a great government such as yours does not act without evidence." Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, of West Germany, voiced his support, as well, and the Soviet Union was prevented from separating the U.S. from Europe. (John Diefenbaker, Prime Minister of Canada, was the only NATO leader who voiced skepticism and disbelief.)

All this was done simultaneously with the President's speech and made possible only by the immense work and painstaking planning which preceded it. During this same period, military preparations went forward. Missile crews were placed on maximum alert. Troops were moved into Florida and the southeastern part of the United States. Late Saturday night, the First Armored Division began to move out of Texas into Georgia, and five more divisions were placed on alert. The base at Guantanamo Bay was strengthened.

The Navy deployed 180 ships into the Caribbean. The Strategic Air Command was dispersed to civilian landing fields around the country, to lessen its vulnerability in case of attack. The B-52 bomber force was ordered into the air fully loaded with atomic weapons. As one came down to land, another immediately took its place in the air.

An hour before the President's speech, Secretary Rusk called in Ambassador Dobrynin and told him of the speech. The newspapers reported that Dobrynin left the Secretary's office looking considerably shaken.

On that Monday afternoon, before his speech and after lunch with his wife, the President held several meetings. At the first, he formally constituted our committee—which up until that time had been called "the group" or "war council"—under National Security Council Action Memorandum Number 196 as the Executive Committee of the National Security Council, "for the purpose of effective conduct of the operations of the executive branch in the current crisis." The President became the official chairman, and until further notice we were to meet with him every morning at 10:00 A.M.

Shortly thereafter, the President met with the members of the Cabinet and informed them for the first time of the crisis. Then, not long before the broadcast, he met with the leaders of Congress. This was the most difficult meeting. I did not attend, but I know from seeing him afterward that it was a tremendous strain.

Many Congressional leaders were sharp in their criticism. They felt that the President should take more forceful action, a military attack or invasion, and that the blockade was far too weak a response. Senator Richard B. Russell, of Georgia, said he could not live with himself if he did not say in the strongest possible terms how important it was that we act with greater strength than the President was contemplating.

Senator J. William Fulbright, of Arkansas, also strongly advised military action rather than such a weak step as the blockade. Others said they were skeptical but would remain publicly silent, only because it was such a dangerous hour for the country.

The President, after listening to the frequently emotional criticism, explained that he would take whatever steps were necessary to protect the security of the United States, but that he did not feel greater military action was warranted initially. Because it was possible that the matter could be resolved without a devastating war, he had decided on the course he had outlined. Perhaps in the end, he said, direct military action would be necessary, but that course should not be followed lightly. In the meantime, he assured them, he had taken measures to prepare our military forces and place them in a position to move.

He reminded them that, once an attack began, our adversaries could respond with a missile barrage from which many *millions* of Americans would be killed. That was a gamble he was not willing to take until he had finally and forcefully exhausted all other possibilities. He told them this was an extremely hazardous undertaking and that everyone should understand the risks involved.

He was upset by the time the meeting ended. When we discussed it later he was more philosophical, pointing out that the Congressional leaders' reaction to what we should do, although more militant than his, was much the same as our first reaction when we first heard about the missiles the previous Tuesday.

At 7:00 o'clock, he went on television to the nation to explain the situation in Cuba and the reasons for the quarantine. He was calm and confident that he had selected the right course.

In his speech, he emphasized that the blockade was the *initial* step. He had ordered the Pentagon to make all the preparations necessary for further military action. Secretary McNamara, in a confidential report, had listed the requirements: 250,000 men, 2,000 air sorties against the various targets in Cuba, and 90,000 Marines and Airborne in the invasion force. One estimate of American casualties put the expected figure over 25,000. The President gave his approval for these preparations, and the plans moved ahead. Troops were rapidly moving into the southeastern part of the U.S., equipped and prepared. Arrangements were begun to gather

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We went to bed that night filled with concern and trepidation, but filled also with a sense of pride in the strength, the purposefulness, and the courage of the President of the United States. No one could predict what was in store in the days ahead, but we all felt that the President, because of his own wisdom and personal dignity, would have the support of a unified country.

The next day, Tuesday, was the important meeting of the OAS previously mentioned. It was anticipated that we might have difficulty obtaining the two thirds vote of support necessary for the ordering of a quarantine. But the Latin American countries, demonstrating a unique sense of unity, unanimously supported the recommendations of the United States. In fact, a number contributed men, supplies, and ships during the several weeks that followed.

Our group met with the President at 10:00 in the morning at the White House. There was a certain spirit of lightness—not gaiety certainly, but a feeling of relaxation, perhaps. We had taken the first step, it wasn't so bad, and we were still alive.

There was much to report. John McCloy, formerly High Commissioner to Germany and an adviser to President Kennedy on European and security matters, had been located in Germany and asked to return and join with Adlai Stevenson in presenting our case to the United Nations. As a Republican, he made our efforts there bipartisan, and as a counterbalance to Stevenson's point of view, he had initially favored a military attack and invasion of Cuba.

John McCone reported to our committee that as yet there had been no general alert of the Soviet forces in Cuba or around the globe. No extraordinary military action of any kind had been reported. In Cuba, the Russians were not permitting anyone other than Russian technical and military personnel to enter the missile bases. He also reported that they were beginning to camouflage the missile sites. It was never clear why they waited until that late date to do so.

The President ordered preparations to proceed for a possible blockade of Berlin. We also discussed in detail what would be done if a U-2 plane were to be shot down, agreeing that—after obtaining specific permission from the President—bomber and fighter planes would destroy a surface-to-air-missile site. Secretary McNamara said that such an attack could take place within two hours after notification of the firing on one of our planes.

By this time, the relaxed, lighter mood had completely disappeared. It had taken only a few minutes.

President Kennedy expressed his deep concern that no error should occur, and that any attack against one of our planes be verified before we return the attack. He asked about the fate of pilots who might be shot down. He then asked Secretary McNamara to put into effect a rescue mission to supplement our U-2 flights. He agreed with Secretary McNamara on extending certain military-personnel tours of duty and on placing the 101st Airborne in readiness for early action. He wanted to make certain that we would have taken all the necessary steps, in case of a military reaction by the Soviets.

"Now, the only thing I say once again is that if the Russians' response makes a military action or invasion inevitable, I want to be able to feel that we will not have to waste any days having to get ready," he said.

At the end of the meeting, the President pointed out that an attack on one of their installations might very well bring an attack against our airfields. He asked for a report from the military as to whether our own planes had been dispersed. When it was reported to him that our photography showed that the Russians and Cubans had inexplicably lined up their planes wing tip to wing tip on Cuban airfields, making them perfect targets, he requested General Taylor to have a U-2 fly a photographic mission over our fields in Florida. "It would be interesting if we have done the same thing," he remarked. We had. He examined the pictures the next day and ordered the Air Force to disperse our planes.

Finally, he made arrangements for regular meetings with ambassadors from the European countries, to prepare for a blockade of Berlin, as well as other contingencies elsewhere. Nothing, whether a weighty matter or small detail, was overlooked.

We came back about 6:00 o'clock that evening. The OAS had announced its support, and the President prepared the proclamation which would put the quarantine into effect at 10:00 o'clock the next morning.

During the course of this meeting, we learned that an extraordinary number of coded messages had been sent to all the Russian ships on their way to Cuba. What they said we did not know then, nor do we know now, but it was clear that the ships as of

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that moment were still straight on course.

The President composed a letter to Khrushchev, asking him to observe the quarantine legally established by a vote of the OAS, making it clear that the U.S. did not wish to fire on any ships of the Soviet Union, and adding at the end: "I am concerned that we both show prudence and do nothing to allow events to make the situation more difficult to control than it is."

We then discussed in detail the rules that were to be given to the Navy intercepting a merchant vessel in the quarantine zone. To avoid a major military confrontation if a vessel refused to stop, the Navy was to shoot at its rudders and propellers, disabling the vessel but, hopefully, avoiding any loss of life or the sinking of the ship. The President then expressed concern about the boarding of these vessels if the Russians decided to resist. We could anticipate a rough, fierce fight and many casualties, he said. Secretary McNamara felt the vessel might not have to be boarded but would, within a reasonably short period of time, have to be towed into Jacksonville or Charleston.

"What would you do then," the President said, "if we go through all of this effort and then find out there's baby food on it?" Everyone agreed that we should try to intercept the vessels on which there was quite clearly military equipment, but the treatment of other vessels in the meantime posed a serious problem. What criteria could we use for letting some merchant ships through and stopping others? And then how could we be sure?

Our problems for that day were hardly over. John McCone reported that Russian submarines were beginning to move into the Caribbean. One had refueled the day before in the Azores and was headed now toward Cuba. The President ordered the Navy to give the highest priority to tracking the submarines and to put into effect the greatest possible safety measures to protect our own aircraft carriers and other vessels.

After the meeting, the President, Ted Sorensen, Kenny O'Donnell, and I sat in his office and talked. "The great danger and risk in all of this," he said, "is a miscalculation—a mistake in judgment." A short time before, he had read Barbara Tuchman's book *The Guns of August*, and he talked about the miscalculations of the Germans, the Russians, the Austrians, the French, and the British. They somehow seemed to tumble into war, he said, through stupidity, individual idiosyncrasies, misunderstandings, and personal complexes of inferiority and grandeur. We talked about the miscalculation of the Germans in 1939 and the still unfulfilled commitments and guarantees that the British had given to Poland.

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 wanted to avoid. He did not want anyone to be able to write, at a later date, a book on "The Missiles of October" and say that the U.S. had not done all it could to preserve the peace. 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.

Afterward, the President and I talked for a little while alone. He suggested I might visit Ambassador Dobrynin and personally relate to him the serious implications of the Russians' duplicity and the crisis they had created through the presence of their missiles within Cuba.

I called Dobrynin and made arrangements to see him at 9:30 that same Tuesday night. I met with him in his office on the third floor of the Russian Embassy. I reviewed with him the circumstances of the past six weeks which had brought about this confrontation. I pointed out to him that, when I had met with him in early September, he had told me that the Russians had not placed any long-range missiles in Cuba and had no intentions of doing so in the future.

He interrupted at that moment and said that was exactly what he had told me and that he had given me his word that the Soviet Union would not put missiles in Cuba that could reach the continental United States.

I said that, based on that statement and the subsequent statement by Tass, the Soviet news agency, the President had taken a less belligerent attitude toward the Soviet Union's actions than other political figures in the U.S. and assured the American people that military action was not necessary against Cuba. Now the President knew he had been deceived, and that had devastating implications for the peace of the world.

Dobrynin's only answer was that he told me there were no missiles in Cuba; that this was what Khrushchev had said, and, as far as he knew, there were still no missiles in Cuba. He then asked me why President Kennedy had not told Gromyko the facts when he had seen him the previous Thursday.

I replied by saying there was nothing the President could tell Gromyko that Gromyko didn't already know—and, after all, why didn't Gromyko tell the President? In fact, the President was shocked that Gromyko's statements even at that late date were so misleading. Dobrynin was extremely concerned. As I left, I asked him if the Soviet ships were going to go through to Cuba. He replied that that had been their instructions and he knew of no changes.

I left the Russian Embassy around 10:15 P.M. and went back to the White House. I found the President meeting Ambassador David Ormsby-Gore, of Great Britain, an old friend whom he trusted implicitly. I related the conversation to both of them. The President talked about the possibility of arranging an immediate summit with Khrushchev, but finally dismissed the idea, concluding that such a meeting would be useless until Khrushchev first accepted, as a result of our deeds as well as our statements, the U.S. determination in this matter. Before a summit took place, and it should, the President wanted to have some cards in his own hands.

Ambassador Ormsby-Gore expressed concern that the line of interception for the quarantine had been extended 800 miles. This would mean a probable interception within a very few hours after it was put into effect. "Why not give them more time," he said, "to analyze their position?" The 800 miles had been fixed by the Navy to stay outside the range of some of the MIG fighters in Cuba. The President called McNamara and shortened it to 500 miles.

The next morning, Wednesday, the quarantine went into effect, and the reports during the early hours told of the Russian ships coming steadily on toward Cuba. I talked with the President for a few moments before we went in to our regular meeting. He said, "It looks really mean, doesn't it? But then, really there was no other choice. If they get this mean on this one in our part of the world, what will they do on the next?" "I just don't think there was any choice," I said, "and not only that, if you hadn't acted, you would have been impeached." The President thought for a moment and said, "That's what I think—I would have been impeached."

The choice was to have gone in and taken steps which were not necessary or to have acted as we did. At least we now had the support of the whole Western Hemisphere and all our allies around the world.

This Wednesday-morning meeting, along with that of the following Saturday, October 27, seemed the most trying, the most difficult, and the most filled with tension. The Russian ships were proceeding, they were nearing the 500-mile barrier, and we either had to intercept them or announce we were withdrawing. I sat across the table from the President. This was the moment we had prepared for, which we hoped would never come. The danger and concern that we all felt hung like a cloud over us all and particularly over the President.

The U-2s and low-flying planes had returned the previous day with their film, and through the evening it was analyzed—by now in such volume that the film alone was more than 125 miles long and 25 miles wide. The results were presented to us at the meeting. The launching pads, the missiles, the concrete boxes, the nuclear storage bunkers, all the components were there, by now clearly defined and obvious. Comparisons with the pictures of a few days earlier made clear that the work on those sites was proceeding and that within a few days several of the launching pads would be ready for war.

It was now a few minutes after 10:00 o'clock. Secretary McNamara announced that two Russian ships, the *Gagarin* and the *Komiles*, were within a few miles of our quarantine barrier. The interception of both ships would probably be before noon Washington time. Indeed, the expectation was that at least one of the vessels would be stopped and boarded between 10:30 and 11:00 o'clock.

Then came the disturbing Navy report that a Russian submarine had moved into position between the two ships.

It had originally been planned to have a cruiser make the first interception, but, because of the increased danger, it was decided in the past few hours to send in an aircraft carrier, supported by helicopters, carrying antisubmarine equipment, hovering overhead. The carrier *Essex* was to signal the submarine by sonar to surface and identify itself. If it refused, said Secretary McNamara, depth charges with a small explosive would be used until the submarine surfaced.

I think these few minutes were the time of gravest concern for the President. Was the world on the brink of a holocaust? Was it our error? A mistake? Was there something further that should have been done? Or not done? His hand went up to his face and covered his mouth. He opened and closed his fist. His face seemed drawn, his eyes pained, almost gray. We stared at each other across the table. For a few fleeting seconds, it was almost as though no one else was there and he was no longer the President.

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Thirteen days

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Inexplicably, I thought of when he was ill and almost died; when he lost his child; when we learned that our oldest brother had been killed; of personal times of strain and hurt. The voices droned on, but I didn't seem to hear anything until I heard the President say: "Isn't there some way we can avoid having our first exchange with a Russian submarine—almost anything but that?" "No, there's too much danger to our ships. There is no alternative," said McNamara. "Our commanders have been instructed to avoid hostilities if at all possible, but this is what we must be prepared for, and this is what we must expect."

We had come to the time of final decision. "We must expect that they will close down Berlin—make the final preparations for that," the President said. I felt we were on the edge of a precipice with no way off. This time, the moment was now—not next week—not tomorrow, "so we can have another meeting and decide"; not in eight hours, "so we can send another message to Khrushchev and perhaps he will finally understand." No, none of that was possible. One thousand miles away in the vast expanse of the Atlantic Ocean the final decisions were going to be made in the next few minutes. President Kennedy had initiated the course of events, but he no longer had control over them. He would have to wait—we would have to wait. The minutes in the Cabinet Room ticked slowly by. What could we say now—what could we do?

Then it was 10:25—a messenger brought in a note to John McCone. "Mr. President, we have a preliminary report which seems to indicate that some of the Russian ships have stopped dead in the water."

Stopped dead in the water? Which ships? Are they checking the accuracy of the report? Is it true? I looked at the clock. 10:32. "The report is accurate, Mr. President. Six ships previously on their way to Cuba at the edge of the quarantine line have stopped or have turned back toward the Soviet Union. A representative from the Office of Naval Intelligence is on his way over with the full report." A short time later, the report came that the 20 Russian ships closest to the barrier had stopped and were dead in the water or had turned around.

"So no ships will be stopped or intercepted," said the President. I said we should make sure the Navy knew nothing was to be done, that no ships were to be interfered with. Orders would go out to the Navy immediately. "If the ships have orders to turn around, we want to give them every opportunity to do so. Get in direct touch with the 'Essex,' and tell them not to do anything, but give the Russian vessels an opportunity to turn back. We must move quickly because the time is expiring," said the President.

Then we were back to the details. The meeting droned on. But everyone looked like a different person. For a moment the world had stood still, and now it was going around again.

Despite what had happened, the danger was anything but over. We learned later in the day that 14 of the ships had stopped or had turned back to Russia. Most of those continuing were tankers.

The ship that became the matter of greatest concern was a Russian tanker called the *Bucharest*. During the day, it had reached the barrier, identified itself to one of our naval ships, and, because it was a tanker, been allowed to pass. There was little likelihood that the *Bucharest* carried any missiles or any of the kinds of armament covered by the quarantine. Nevertheless, there were those in the Executive Committee who felt strongly that the *Bucharest* should be stopped and boarded, so that Khrushchev would make no mistake of our will or intent. The President himself emphasized that eventually we would have to stop and board one of the ships approaching Cuba. Those who favored letting the *Bucharest* pass argued that it probably carried no contraband and that Khrushchev needed more time to consider what he should do.

The President postponed a decision and ordered the *Bucharest* shadowed by American warships. At that time, it was proceeding toward Cuba at 17 knots, and a decision had to be made before nightfall.

Meanwhile, the whole world was becoming more and more alarmed. All kinds of people were, officially and unofficially, giving their advice and opinions. Bertrand Russell sent a message to Khrushchev praising him for his conciliatory position and a message to President Kennedy castigating the United States for its warlike attitude. The President took time out of his other deliberations personally to compose an answer: "I think your attention might well be directed to the burglar rather than to those who caught the burglar."

U Thant, Acting Secretary General of the United Nations, suggested that the quarantine be lifted for several weeks if in return the Russians agreed not to send missiles to Cuba. Khrushchev agreed and suggested a summit meeting. President Kennedy responded that the crisis was "created by the secret introduction of offensive weapons into Cuba and the answer lies in the removal of such weapons." He added that we would be happy to have any discussions leading to a satisfactory and peaceful solution, but the missiles in Cuba had to be removed.

Adlai Stevenson, at a meeting of the United Nation's Security Council, publicly confronted Ambassador V. A. Zorin of the Soviet Union. President Kennedy had made arrangements for photographs of the missile sites to be furnished to Stevenson. Many newspapers around the world, and particularly in Great Britain, were openly skeptical of the U.S. position. At the urgings of Pierre Salinger, the President's Press Secretary, and of Don Wilson, representing the USIA, the President released the pictures for use at the UN and for publication. Stevenson used them most skillfully in his dramatic televised confrontation with the Russians:

Stevenson: "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. Those 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 U.S.S.R. 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?"

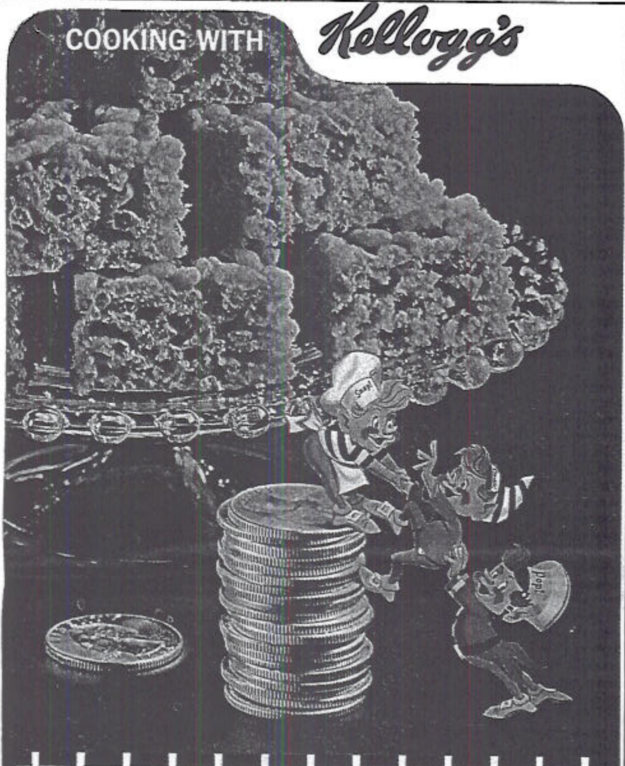
Zorin: "I am not in an American courtroom, sir, and therefore I do not wish to answer a question that is put to me in the fashion in which a prosecutor puts questions. In due course, sir, you will have your answer."

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." And with that Stevenson revealed the photographs of the Russian missiles and sites, with devastating effect.

That evening, the President, after further heated discussion, made the final decision permitting the *Bucharest* to go through to Cuba. Against the advice of many of his advisers and of the military, he decided to give Khrushchev more time. "We don't



marshmallow treats

Make 'em crunchy with Kellogg's* Rice Krispies* —then collect 25¢ from Snap, Crackle, and Pop

Once again you're invited to make Marshmallow Treats and collect a quarter for your fun. Just send your name and address to: Marshmallow Treats, P.O. Box 1965, Marion, Ohio 43302; and include the refund form from specially-marked packages of Kellogg's Rice Krispies cereal (6-oz. or larger), and brand name and weight from a marshmallow package (6-oz. or larger), or label from a marshmallow creme jar. Your 25¢ will be mailed back promptly.

(Offer limited to one per family and expires May 31, 1969.) Each family's request must be mailed separately. All others will be returned. Sorry, we cannot honor multiple requests.

¼ cup butter or margarine
6-10 ounces regular marshmallows (about 40) or 4 cups miniature marshmallows
5 cups KELLOGG'S RICE KRISPIES cereal

1. Melt butter in 3-quart saucepan. Add marshmallows and cook over low heat, stirring constantly, until marshmallows are melted and mixture is syrupy. Remove from heat.
2. Add Rice Krispies cereal and stir until well-coated.
3. Press warm mixture evenly and firmly into buttered 13 x 9-inch pan. Cut into squares when cool.

Yield: 24 2-inch squares

Note: About 2 cups marshmallow creme may be substituted for marshmallows. Add to melted butter and cook over low heat about 5 minutes, stirring constantly. Proceed as directed in step number 2 above.

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want to push him to a precipitous action—give him time to consider. I don't want to put him in a corner from which he cannot escape."

In the meantime, however, he increased the pressure in other ways. Low-flying flights of eight planes apiece flew over Cuba morning and afternoon, supplementing the photography of the U-2s. All six Russian submarines then in the area or moving toward Cuba from the Atlantic were followed and harassed and, at one time or another, forced to surface in the presence of U.S. military ships.

By now, in the Caribbean surrounding Cuba, we had 25 destroyers, two cruisers, several submarines, several carriers, and a large number of support ships.

On the night of Thursday, October 25, our aerial photography revealed that work on the missile sites was proceeding at an extraordinarily rapid pace. By the following evening, October 26, it was clear that the IL-28 bombers were also being rapidly uncrated and assembled.

By this time, an East German passenger ship, carrying some 1,500 people, had reached the barrier. Another decision had to be made. Again, there were strong arguments within our group as to what should be done. Again, there were those who urged that the ship be stopped; that it would not directly involve the prestige of the Russians, as it was not a ship of Soviet registry and stopping it would not violate U Thant's request that we not interfere with Russian vessels. The President ultimately decided that the risk of life was so great—with so many people aboard the ship, and so high a possibility of something going seriously wrong—that he would let the vessel through.

There were almost daily communications with Khrushchev. On Monday, October 22, the day of his speech to the nation, President Kennedy sent a long letter and a copy of his statement directly to the Soviet Chairman. In the course of the letter he said:

"In our discussions and exchanges on Berlin and other international questions, the one thing that has most concerned me has been the possibility that your Government would not correctly understand the will and determination of the United States in any given situation, since I have not assumed that you or any other sane man would, in this nuclear age, deliberately plunge the world into war which it is crystal clear no country could win and which could only result in catastrophic consequences to the whole world, including the aggressor."

Khrushchev, in a letter received October 23, had accused the President of threatening him and the Soviet Union with the blockade and asserted that it was not going to be observed by the Soviet Union. "The actions of the USA with regard to Cuba are outright banditry or, if you like, the folly of degenerate imperialism." The U.S., he said, was pushing mankind "to the abyss of a world missile-nuclear war," and the Soviet Union would not give instructions to the captains of Soviet vessels bound for Cuba to obey the orders of American naval forces. If any effort to interfere with Soviet ships were to be made, "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."

The President replied on Thursday, October 25, restating again what had occurred and stressing that—despite private and public assurances that missiles would not be placed in Cuba—that very step had been taken by the Soviet Union.

"In early September I indicated very plainly that the United States would regard any shipment of offensive weapons as presenting the gravest issues. After that time, this Government received the most explicit assurances from your Government and its representatives, both publicly and privately, that no offensive weapons were being sent to Cuba. If you will review the statement issued by Tass in September, you will see how clearly this assurance was given.

"In reliance on these solemn assurances I urged restraint upon those in this country who were urging action in this matter at that time. And then I learned beyond doubt what you have not denied—namely, that all these public assurances were false and that your military people had set out recently to establish a set of missile bases in Cuba. I ask you to recognize clearly, Mr. Chairman, that it was not I who issued the first challenge in this case, and that in the light of this record these activities in Cuba required the responses I have announced.

"I repeat my regret that these events should cause a deterioration in our relations."

And then he added, very simply: "I hope that your Government will take the necessary action to permit a restoration of the earlier situation."

All our efforts and letters, however, seemed to be having little effect. On the contrary, as we waited for the reply to President Kennedy's latest

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Elegant things Happen

WHEN YOU ADD BLUE DIAMOND ALMONDS

Almonds add flair, flavor and wonderful texture. Here we show you all seven ready-to-use forms, and an intriguing recipe for each. Let your imagination take it from there!

Whole Natural

ORIENTAL SALAD Toss together cooked frozen peas, rinsed and drained canned shrimp, drained canned whole onions, sliced celery and whole natural almonds with a mayonnaise dressing flavored with lemon juice, soy sauce and curry powder. Chill. Heap into an iceberg lettuce-lined bowl.

Sliced Natural

ALMOND DANISH RING Overlap refrigerated orange Danish rolls to form a 7-inch ring on cookie sheet. Bake at 375° F. for 15-18 minutes until golden brown. Frost with the included icing; then lightly press ¼ cup Blue Diamond sliced natural almonds into frosting. Serves 4. (Double the recipe for a big holiday ring!)

Sliced Blanched

ALMONDINE SAUCE Melt ½ cup butter over low heat. Add ⅓ cup sliced blanched almonds and brown lightly. Remove from heat; add ¼ teaspoon salt and 2 tablespoons lemon juice. Serve over sole, trout or other fish. Delicious on vegetables and steak, too. (You may also use roasted slivered almonds for this recipe.)

Ground Blanched

SOUP ALMONDINE In a kettle combine 2 cups ground blanched almonds, 2 tablespoons instant minced onion, 3 cups water*, 3 tablespoons chicken stock base*, ¼ teaspoon salt, ½ teaspoon coriander seed. Simmer 30 minutes. Remove from heat; strain and gradually stir in 1⅓ cups milk. Heat gently until thoroughly heated through. Serve hot or cold garnished with grated orange rind. Makes 4 large or 8 small servings.

Whole Blanched

BUFFET CASSEROLE Cover and boil 30 min. 2 cups rice, 3 env. chicken noodle soup, 9 cups boiling water. Fry 2 lbs. bulk pork sausage; drain off most of fat. Chop 1 bunch celery, 1 green pepper, 2 onions; add to sausage and sauté. Stir in rice, 1 cup whole blanched almonds, halved; top with more almonds. Bake at 350° F. 30 min. Makes 16 servings (1 cup each).

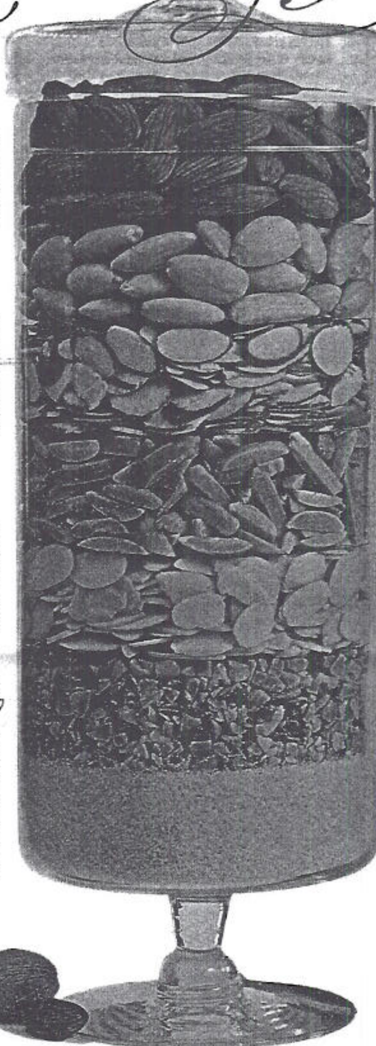
Roasted Slivered

ALMOND PEACH UPSIDE DOWN CAKE Sprinkle mixture of ⅓ cup butter, ½ cup each brown and granulated sugar, 12 maraschino cherries and ½ cup roasted slivered almonds over bottom of 13x9x2-inch cake pan. Arrange 1 can (1 lb. 13 oz.) cling peach slices, drained, over mixture. Prepare batter from one package yellow cake mix and spoon over peaches. Bake at 350° F. 40 to 45 minutes. Turn out at once.

Diced Roasted

CHUTNEY CHEESE BLOCK Coat a chilled 8 oz. block cream cheese with ⅔ cup diced roasted almonds. Place on serving plate, spoon bottled chutney over and serve with sesame seed crackers.

*3 cups chicken broth and 5 chicken bouillon cubes may be substituted.



THE CHOICE FRESH ALMONDS FROM CALIFORNIA, IN TINS AND CELLO PACKS, ARE **BLUE DIAMOND ALMONDS**

CALIFORNIA ALMOND GROWERS EXCHANGE, P.O. BOX 1768, SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95808

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communication with Khrushchev, reports came in that a greater number of Russian personnel were working to expedite the construction of the missile sites and to assemble the IL-28s.

At 7:00 o'clock Friday morning, October 26, the first vessel was stopped and boarded. She was surely an international ship. It was the *Marucla*, an American-built Liberty ship, Panamanian owned, registered from Lebanon, and bound for Cuba under a Soviet charter from the Baltic port of Riga. The *Marucla* had been sighted the night before and followed by two destroyers: the *John Pierce* and—a surprise to President Kennedy—the *Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr.*, the destroyer named after the oldest member of our family, who was a Navy pilot and was killed in the Second World War. The *Marucla* had been carefully and personally selected by President Kennedy to be the first ship stopped and boarded. He was demonstrating to Khrushchev that we were going to enforce the quarantine and yet, because it was not a Soviet-owned vessel, it did not represent a direct affront to the Soviets, requiring a response from them. It gave them more time, but simultaneously demonstrated that the U.S. meant business.

At 7:24 A.M., an armed boarding party from both destroyers went alongside the *Marucla* and by 8:00 was aboard and had started the inspection. There were no incidents. The vessel was found to contain no weapons and was allowed to sail on.

The fact that this inspection had been successfully accomplished, however, did not lift the feeling of gloom that was settling over our committee and its deliberations. The Soviet Union had been adamant in its refusal to recognize the quarantine. At the same time, it was obviously preparing its missiles in Cuba for possible use. The President in response ordered a gradual increase in pressure, still attempting to avoid the alternative of direct military action. He increased the number of low-level flights over Cuba from twice a day to once every two hours. Preparations went ahead for night flights, which would take pictures of the missile sites with bright flares that would be dropped across the island. The State Department and the Defense Department were asked to prepare to add petroleum oil and lubricants to the embargo list.

But privately the President was not sanguine about the results of even these efforts. Each hour the situation grew steadily more serious. The feeling grew that this cup was not going to pass and that a direct military confrontation between the two great nuclear powers was inevitable. Both "hawks" and "doves" sensed that our combination of limited force and diplomatic efforts had been unsuccessful. If the Russians continued to be adamant and continued to build up their missile strength, military force would be the only alternative.

Recognizing this, Friday morning, President Kennedy ordered the State Department to proceed with preparations for a crash program on civil government in Cuba to be established after the invasion and occupation of that country. Secretary McNamara reported the conclusion of the military that we should expect very heavy casualties in an invasion.

The President turned to us all: "We are going to have to face the fact that, if we do invade, by the time we get to these sites, after a very bloody fight, they will be pointed at us. And we must further accept the possibility that when military hostilities first begin, those missiles will be fired."

John McCone said everyone should understand that an invasion was going to be a much more serious undertaking than most people had previously realized. "They have a hell of a lot of equipment," he said. "And it will be damn tough to shoot them out of those hills, as we learned so clearly in Korea."

Despite the heavy pressure on the big decisions, President Kennedy followed every detail. He requested, for instance, the names of all the Cuban doctors in the Miami area, should their services be required in Cuba. Learning that a U.S. military ship with extremely sensitive equipment (similar to the *Liberty* that was struck by Israel during the Israeli-Arab war) was very close to the coast of Cuba, he ordered it farther out to sea, where it would be less vulnerable to attack. He supervised everything, from the contents of leaflets to be dropped over Cuba to the assembling of ships for the invasion.

In the meantime, we awaited Khrushchev's answer.

At 6:00 o'clock that night the message came.

A great deal has been written about this message, including the allegation that, at the time Khrushchev wrote it, he must have been so unstable or emotional that he had become incoherent. 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.

We must not succumb to "petty passions" or to "transient things," he wrote, but should realize 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. I have participated in two wars and know that war ends when it has rolled through cities and villages, everywhere sowing death and destruction." The United States, he went on to say, should not be concerned about the missiles in Cuba; they would never be used to attack the United States and were there for defensive purposes only. "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 die, could do this."

But he went on: "We want something quite different...not to destroy your country...but despite our ideological differences, to compete peacefully, not by military means."

There was no purpose, he said, for us to interfere with any of his ships now bound for Cuba, for they contained no weapons. He then explained why they carried no missiles: *all the shipments* of weapons were already within Cuba. This was the first time he had acknowledged the presence of missiles in Cuba. He made reference to the landing at the Bay of Pigs and the fact that President Kennedy had told him in Vienna that this was a mistake. He valued such frankness, wrote Khrushchev, and he, too, had similar courage, for he had acknowledged "those mistakes which had been committed during the history of our state and I not only acknowledge but sharply condemned them." (President Kennedy had told him in Vienna that he was quick to acknowledge and condemn the mistakes of Stalin and others, but he never acknowledged any mistakes of his own.)

The reason he had sent these weapons to Cuba was because the U.S. was interested in overthrowing the Cuban government, as the U.S. had actively attempted to overthrow the Communist government in the Soviet Union after their revolution. Khrushchev and the Soviet people wished to help Cuba protect herself.

But then he went on: "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

Bring the blossoms to your cheek.
Softness never had it so pretty. And neither did you. Until Lady Scott flowered prints came along. In Persian Blue, Venetian Pink, Emerald Green, Antique Gold.
Lady Scott

sides. Consequently, only a madman can believe that armaments are the principal means in the life of 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."

This is my proposal, he said. No more weapons to Cuba and those within Cuba withdrawn or destroyed, and you reciprocate by withdrawing your blockade and also agree not to invade Cuba. Don't interfere, he said, in a piratical way with Russian ships. "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 to 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."

The message was examined and re-examined at a meeting we held late Friday night. As the hours went on into the morning, it was finally decided that the State Department would come forward with an analysis and some recommendations on how it should be answered; that we would meet again early Saturday morning, October 27.

I had a slight feeling of optimism as I drove home from the State Department that night. The letter, with all its rhetoric, had the beginnings perhaps of some accommodation, some agreement. The feeling was strengthened by the fact that John Scali, a very able and experienced reporter for ABC, had been approached by an important official of the Soviet Embassy with a proposal that the Soviet Union would remove the missiles under United Nations supervision and inspection and the U.S. would lift the blockade and give a pledge not to invade Cuba as its part of the understanding. He was asked to transmit this message to the United States government, which he had immediately done.

Why they selected this means of communication was not clear, but an unorthodox procedure of this kind was not unusual for the Soviet Union.

I was also slightly more optimistic because when I left the President that night, he, too, was for the first time hopeful that our efforts might possibly be successful.

On Saturday morning, October 27, I received a memorandum from J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, that gave me a feeling of considerable disquiet. He had received information the night before that certain Soviet personnel in New York were apparently preparing to destroy all sensitive documents on the basis that the U.S. would probably be taking military action against Cuba or Soviet ships, and this would mean war. I asked myself as I drove to the White House: If the Soviets were anxious to find an answer to the crisis, why this conduct on the part of Soviet personnel? Did the Khrushchev letter really indicate a solution could be found?

It was therefore with some sense of foreboding that I went to the meeting of our Ex-Comm committee. My concern was justified. A new, this time very formal, letter had arrived from Khrushchev to President Kennedy. It was obviously no longer Mr. Khrushchev personally who was writing, but the Foreign Office of the Kremlin. The letter was quite different from the letter received twelve hours before. "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 U.S. to make the same pledge regarding Cuba."

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 and on the IL-28s. Thus began the most difficult twenty-four hours of the missile crisis.

The fact was that the proposal the Russians made was not unreasonable and did not amount to a loss to the U.S. or to our NATO allies. On several occasions over the period of the past eighteen months, the President had asked the State Department to reach an agreement with Turkey for the withdrawal of Jupiter missiles in that country. They were clearly obsolete, and our Polaris submarines in the Mediterranean would give Turkey far greater protection.

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At the President's insistence, Secretary Rusk had raised the question with the representatives of Turkey following a NATO meeting in the spring of 1962. The Turks objected, and the matter was permitted to drop. In the summer of 1962, when Rusk was in Europe, President Kennedy raised the question again. He was told by the State Department that they felt it unwise to press the matter with Turkey. But the President disagreed. He wanted the missiles removed even if it would cause political problems for our government. The State Department representatives discussed it again with the Turks and, finding they still objected, did not pursue the matter.

The President believed he was President and that, his wishes made clear, they would be followed and the missiles removed. He therefore dismissed the matter from his mind. Now he learned that the failure to follow up on this matter had permitted the same obsolete Turkish missiles to become hostages of the Soviet Union.

He was angry. He obviously did not wish to order the withdrawal of the missiles from Turkey under threat from the Soviet Union. On the other hand, he did not want to involve the U.S. and mankind in a catastrophic war over missile sites in Turkey that were antiquated and useless. He pointed out to the State Department and the others that, to reasonable people, a trade of this kind might look like a very fair suggestion, that our position had become extremely vulnerable, and that it was our own fault.

The change in the language and tenor of the letters from Khrushchev indicated confusion within the Soviet Union; but there was confusion among us, as well. At that moment, not knowing exactly what to suggest, some recommended writing to Khrushchev and asking him to clarify his two letters. There was no clear course of action. Yet we realized that, as we sat there, the work was proceeding on the missile sites in Cuba, and we now had the additional consideration that if we destroyed these sites and began an invasion, the door was clearly open for the Soviet Union to take reciprocal action against Turkey.

The NATO countries were supporting our position and recommending that the U.S. be firm; but, President Kennedy said, they did not realize the full implications for them. If we carried out an air strike against Cuba and the Soviet Union answered by attacking Turkey, all NATO was going to be involved. Then, immediately, the President would have to decide whether he would use nuclear weapons against the Soviet Union, and all mankind would be threatened.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff joined the meeting and recommended their solution. It had the attraction of being a very simple next step—an air strike on Monday, followed shortly afterward by an invasion. They pointed out to the President that they had always felt the blockade to be far too weak a course and that military steps were the only ones the Soviet Union would understand. They were not at all surprised that nothing had been achieved by limited force, for this is exactly what they had predicted.

In the midst of these deliberations, another message came, to change the whole course of events and alter history. Major Rudolf Anderson, Jr., from South Carolina, one of the two Air Force pilots who had carried out the original U-2 reconnaissance that uncovered the presence of missiles in Cuba, had since flown several other photo-reconnaissance missions and was flying one that Saturday morning, October 27. Our meeting was interrupted by the report that his plane had been hit by a SAM missile, that it had crashed in Cuba, and that he had been killed.

There was sympathy for Major Anderson and his family. There was the knowledge that we had to take military action to protect our pilots. There was the realization that the Soviet Union and Cuba apparently were preparing to do battle. And there was the feeling that the noose was tightening on all of us, on Americans, on mankind, and that the bridges to escape were crumbling.

"How can we send any more U-2 pilots into this area tomorrow unless we take out all of the SAM sites?" the President asked. "We are now in an entirely new ball game."

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 we are embarking on a very hazardous course."

He asked for absolute verification that the U-2 was shot down and did not crash accidentally, and for a careful review, "before we decide finally what we shall do," of the implications of all possible courses of action. His mind went to other areas of the world. What was going to occur in Berlin, in Turkey? If we attacked Cuba, and the Russians reciprocated with an attack on Turkey, would or should the Turkish missiles be fired? He ordered preparations taken to defuse missiles with atomic warheads, so that he personally would have to give permission before they were used. What role should Turkey and the rest of NATO have in determining our response? Within a very short time, they might be faced with decisions of life and death. Before that happened, should they not have a right to learn, if not pass on, what we were deciding to do, particularly if that was likely to affect them in such a rapid and possibly devastating way?

Again and again he emphasized that we must understand the implications of every step. What response could we anticipate? What were the implications for us? He stressed again our responsibility to consider the effect our actions would have on others. NATO was supporting the United States, but were these countries truly and completely aware of the dangers for them? These hourly decisions, necessarily made with such rapidity, could be made only by the President of the United States, but any one of them might close and lock doors for peoples and governments in many other lands. We had to be aware of this responsibility at all times, he said, aware that we were deciding, the President was deciding, for the U.S., the Soviet Union, Turkey, NATO, and really for all mankind....

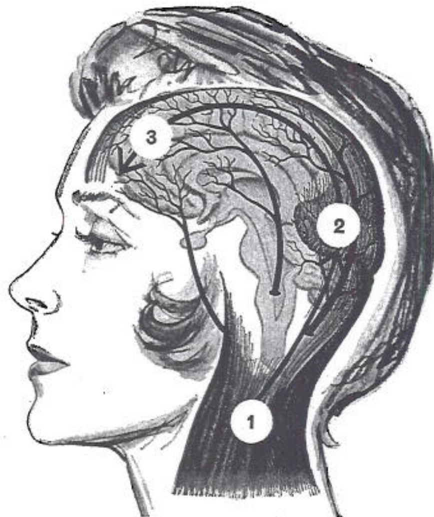
Those hours in the Cabinet Room that Saturday afternoon in October could never be erased from the minds of any of us. We saw as never before the meaning and responsibility involved in the power of the United States, the power of the President, the responsibility we had to people around the globe who had never heard of us, who had never heard of our country or the men sitting in that room determining their fate, making a decision which would influence whether they would live or die.

We won't attack tomorrow, the President said. We shall try again.

The State Department submitted a draft of a letter for response from President Kennedy to Khrushchev. It answered the arguments made in Khrushchev's latest letter, maintaining that we could not remove the missiles from Turkey and that no trade could be made.

I disagreed with the content and tenor of the letter. I suggested, and was supported by Ted Sorensen and others, that we ignore the latest Khrushchev letter and respond to his earlier letter's proposal, as refined in the offer made to John Scali, that the Soviet missiles and offensive weapons would be removed from Cuba under UN inspection and verification if, on its side, the United States would agree with the rest of the Western Hemisphere not to invade Cuba.

There were arguments back and forth. There were sharp disagreements. Everyone was tense; some were already near exhaustion; all were weighted down with concern and worry. President Kennedy was by far



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the calmest. Finally, when we almost seemed unable to communicate with one another, he suggested with a note of some exasperation that—inasmuch as I felt so strongly that the State Department's various efforts to respond were not satisfactory—Ted Sorensen and I should leave the meeting and go into his office and compose an alternative response, so he could then decide between the two. The two of us left and, sitting in the President's office, wrote a draft. Forty-five minutes later, we took it to him and to the whole group. He worked on it, refined it, had it typed, and signed it.

It accepted Khrushchev's "offer":

"Dear Mr. Chairman:

"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 Cuban problem along the lines suggested in your letter of October 26th. As I read your letter, the key elements of your proposals—which seem generally acceptable as I understand them—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 tensions 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 detente 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 problems 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.

"John F. Kennedy"

The President ordered the Ex-Comm committee to meet again at 9:00 P.M. in the White House. While the letter was being typed and prepared for transmission, he and I sat in his office. He talked about Major Anderson and how it is always the brave and the best who die. The politicians and officials sit home pontificating about great principles and issues, make the decisions, and dine with their wives and families, while the brave and the young die. He talked about the miscalculations that lead to war. War is rarely intentional. The Russians don't wish to fight any more than we do. They do not want to war with us nor we with them. And yet if events continue as they have in the last several days, that struggle—which no one wishes, which will accomplish

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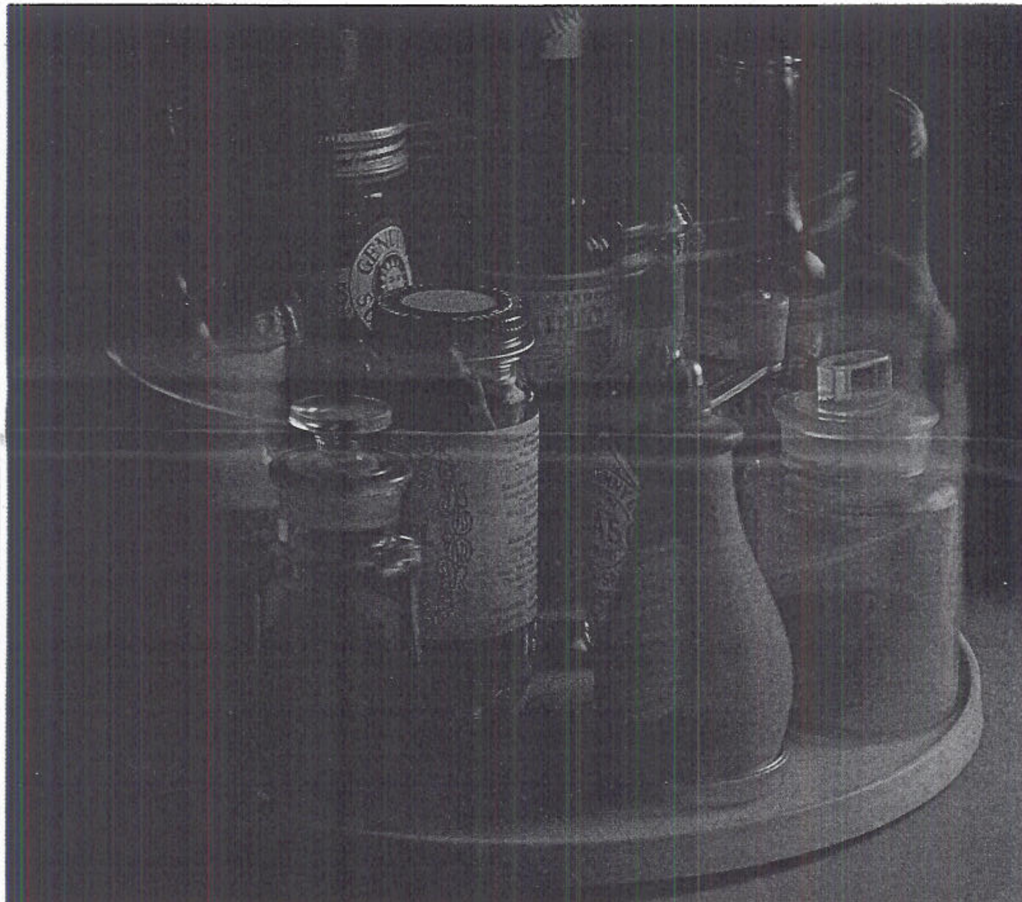

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nothing—will engulf and destroy all mankind.

He wanted to make sure that he had done everything in his power, everything conceivable, to prevent such a catastrophe. Every opportunity was to be given to the Russians to find a peaceful settlement which would not diminish their national security or be a public humiliation. It was not only for Americans that he was concerned, or primarily the older generation of any land. The thought that disturbed him the most, and that made the prospect of war much more fearful than it would otherwise have been, was the specter of the death of the children of this country and all the world—the young people who had no role, who had no say, who knew nothing even of the confrontation, but whose lives would be snuffed out like everyone else's. They would never have a chance to make a decision, to vote in an election, to run for office, to lead a revolution, to determine their own destinies.

Our generation had. But the great tragedy was that, if we erred, we erred not only for ourselves, our futures, our hopes, and our country, but for the lives, futures, hopes, and countries of those who had never been given an opportunity to play a role, to vote aye or nay, to make themselves felt.

It was this that troubled him most, that gave him such pain. And it was then that he and Secretary Rusk decided that I should visit with Ambassador Dobrynin and personally convey the President's great concern.

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

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

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

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

He asked me what offer the United States was making, and I told him of the letter that President Kennedy had just transmitted to Khrushchev. He raised the question of our removing the missiles from Turkey. I said that there could be no quid pro quo or any arrangement made under this kind of threat or pressure, and that in the last analysis this was a decision that would have to be made by NATO. However, I said, President Kennedy had been anxious to remove those missiles from 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.

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.

I returned to the White House. The President was not optimistic, nor was I. He ordered 24 troop-carrier squadrons of the Air Force Reserve to active duty. They would be necessary 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....

I had promised my daughters for a long time that I would take them to the Horse Show, and early Sunday morning I went to the Washington Armory to watch the horses jump. In any case, there was nothing I could do but wait. Around 10:00 o'clock, I received a call at the Horse Show. It was Secretary Rusk. He said he had just received word from the Russians that they had agreed to withdraw the missiles from Cuba.

I went immediately to the White House, and there I received a call from Ambassador Dobrynin, saying he would like to visit with me. I met him in my office at 11:00 A.M.

He told me that the message was coming through that Khrushchev had agreed to dismantle and withdraw the missiles under adequate supervision and inspection; that everything was going to work out satisfactorily; and that Mr. Khrushchev wanted to send his best wishes to the President and to me.

It was quite a different meeting from the night before. I went back to the White House and talked to the President for a long time. While I was there, he placed telephone calls to former Presidents Truman and Eisenhower. As I was leaving, he said, making reference to Abraham Lincoln, "This is the night I should go to the theater." I said, "If you go, I want to go with you." As I closed the door, he was seated at the desk writing a letter to Mrs. Anderson....

I often thought afterward of some of the things we learned from this confrontation. The time that was available to the President and his advisers to work secretly, quietly, privately, developing a course of action and recommendations for the President, was essential. If our deliberations had been publicized, if we had had to make a decision in twenty-four hours, I believe the course that we ultimately would have taken would have been quite different and filled with far greater risks. The fact that we were able to talk, debate, argue, disagree, and then debate some more was essential in choosing our ultimate course. Such time is not always present, although, perhaps surprisingly, on most occasions of great crisis it is; but when it is, it should be utilized.

But more than time is necessary. I believe our deliberations proved conclusively how important it is that the President have the recommendations and opinions of more than one individual, of more than one department, and of more than one point of view. Opinion, even fact itself, can best be judged by conflict, by debate. There is an important element missing when there is unanimity of viewpoint. Yet that not only can happen; it frequently does when the recommendations are being given to the President of the United States. His office creates such respect and awe that it has almost a cowering effect on men. Frequently I saw advisers adapt their

opinions to what they believed President Kennedy and, later, President Johnson wished to hear.

I once attended a preliminary meeting with a Cabinet officer, where we agreed on a recommendation to be made to the President. It came as a slight surprise to me when, a few minutes later, in the meeting with the President himself, the Cabinet officer vigorously and fervently expressed the opposite point of view, which, from the discussion, he quite accurately learned would be more sympathetically received by the President.

We had virtual unanimity at the time of the Bay of Pigs. At least, if any officials in the highest ranks of government were opposed, they did not speak out. Thereafter, I suggested there be a devil's advocate to give an opposite opinion if none was pressed. At the time of the Cuban missile crisis, this was obviously not needed.

It is also important that different departments of government be represented. Thirty years ago, the world was a far, far different place. The Secretary of State and his department could handle all international problems. Perhaps they were not always handled correctly, but at least this handling by one department was manageable. Our commitments were few—we were not as widely involved as we are today—but we were nevertheless a very powerful nation. We could and did, in places we felt our national interests were involved (such as Latin America), impose our will by force if we believed it necessary. The Secretary of State dealt with all the responsibilities without great difficulty, giving foreign-policy advice to the President, administering the department, directing our relationships with that handful of countries which were considered significant, and protecting the financial interests of our citizens around the world.

But that position has very little relationship with that of the Secretary of State today. The title is the same; it still deals with foreign affairs; but there the similarity virtually disappears. Today, the Secretary of State's position is at least five jobs, five different areas of responsibility, all of which could properly require his full time.

The Secretary of State must deal with more than 120 countries, attend to the affairs of the United Nations, and travel to numerous countries. He must receive ambassadors, attend dinners, and handle other protocol and social affairs (and lest anyone believe this to be unimportant, we might remember that Secretary Rusk missed President Kennedy's extremely important meeting with Prime Minister Macmillan in Nassau because of a diplomatic dinner he felt he should attend). The Secretary of State must deal with a dozen crises of various significance that arise every week all over the globe, in the Congo, Nigeria, Indonesia, Aden, or elsewhere. He must deal with the one or two major crises that seem to be always with us, such as Berlin in 1961, Cuba in 1962, and now Vietnam. Finally, he must administer one of the largest and most complicated of all departments.

Beyond the time and energy that are required in administering the office, there is another major difference in foreign affairs. Thirty years ago, only the State Department was involved in international matters. But that is no longer true. A number of other agencies and departments have primary responsibilities and power in the foreign-relations field, including the Pentagon, the CIA, the Agency for International Development, and, to a lesser degree, the USIA and other independent or semi-independent departments.

In some countries of the world, the most powerful single voice is that of the AID administrator, with the Ambassador—even though he is representing the State Department and is ostensibly the chief spokesman for the United States and its President—having relatively little power. In some countries that I visited, the dominant U.S. figure was the representative of the CIA; in several of the Latin American countries, it was the head of our military mission. In all these countries, an important role was played by the USIA and, to a lesser degree, the Peace Corps, the Export-Import Bank, the American business community in general, and, in certain countries, particular businessmen.

Individual representatives of at least the Pentagon, the CIA, and AID must be heard and listened to by the President of the United States in addition to the State Department. They have information, intelligence, opinions, and judgments which may be invaluable and which may be quite different from those of the State Department.

It is also true that, because of the heavy responsibility of the Secretary of State, he cannot possibly keep himself advised on the details of every crisis with which his department has to deal. There is also the risk that, as information is sifted through a number of different hands up to him or to the President, vital facts may be eliminated or distorted through an

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error of judgment. Thus it is essential for a President to have personal access to those within the department who have expertise and knowledge. He can in this way have available unfiltered information to as great a degree as is practical and possible.

During the Cuban missile crisis, the President not only received information from all the significant departments, but went to considerable lengths to ensure that he was not insulated from individuals or points of view because of rank or position. He wanted the advice of his Cabinet officers, but he also wanted the opinion of those who were connected with the situation itself. He wanted to hear from Secretary Rusk, but he also wished to hear from Tommy Thompson, former (and now again) Ambassador to the Soviet Union, whose advice on the Russians and predictions as to what they would do were uncannily accurate and whose advice and recommendations were surpassed by none; from Ed Martin, Assistant Secretary for Latin America, who organized our effort to secure the backing of the Latin American countries; also from George Ball, the Under Secretary of State, whose advice and judgment were invaluable. He wanted to hear from Secretary McNamara, but he wanted to hear also from Under Secretary Gilpatric, whose ability, knowledge, and judgment he sought in every serious crisis.

On other occasions, I had frequently observed efforts being made to exclude certain individuals from participating in a meeting with the President because they held a different point of view. Often, the President would become aware of this fact and enlarge the meetings to include other opinions. At the missile-crisis conferences he made certain there were experts and representatives of different points of view. President Kennedy wanted people who raised questions, who criticized, on whose judgment he could rely, who presented an intelligent point of view, regardless of their rank or viewpoint.

He wanted to hear presented and challenged all the possible consequences of a particular course of action. The first step might appear sensible, but what would be the reaction of our adversaries and would we actually stand to gain? I remember an earlier meeting on Laos, in 1961, when the military unanimously recommended sending in substantial numbers of U. S. troops to stabilize the country. They were to be brought in through two airports with limited capability. Someone questioned what we would do if only a limited number landed and then the Communist Pathet Lao knocked out the airports and proceeded to attack our troops, limited in number and not completely equipped. The representatives of the military said we would then have to destroy Hanoi and possibly use nuclear weapons. President Kennedy did not send in the troops and concentrated on diplomatic steps to protect our interests.

It was to obtain an unfettered and objective analysis that he frequently, and in critical times, invited Secretary of the Treasury Douglas Dillon, for whose wisdom he had such respect; Kenny O'Donnell, his appointment secretary; Ted Sorensen; and, at times, former Secretary of State Dean Acheson; former Secretary of Defense Robert Lovett; former High Commissioner of Germany John McCloy; and others. They asked the difficult questions; they made others defend their position; they presented a different point of view; and they were skeptical.

I think this was more necessary in the military field than any other. President Kennedy was impressed with the effort and dedicated manner in which the military responded—the Navy deploying its vessels into the Caribbean; the Air Force going on continuous alert; the Army and the Marines moving their soldiers and equipment into the southeastern part of the U.S.; and all of them alert and ready for combat.

But he was distressed that the representatives with whom he met, with the notable exception of General Taylor, seemed to give so little consideration to the implications of steps they suggested. They seemed always to assume that if the Russians and the Cubans would not respond or, if they did, that a war was in our national interest. One of the Joint Chiefs of Staff once said to me he believed in a preventive attack against the Soviet Union. On that fateful Sunday morning when the Russians answered they were withdrawing their missiles, it was suggested by one high military adviser that we attack Monday in any case. Another felt that we had in some way been betrayed.

President Kennedy was disturbed by this inability to look beyond the limited military field. When we talked about this later, he said we had to remember that they were trained to fight and to wage war—that was their life. Perhaps we would feel even more concerned if they were always opposed to using arms or military means—for if they would not be willing, who would be? But this experience pointed out for us all the importance of civilian direction and control and the importance of raising probing questions to military recommendations.

It was for these reasons, and many more, that President Kennedy regarded Secretary McNamara as the most valuable public servant in his Administration and in the government.

From all this probing and examination—of the military, State Department, and their recommendations—President Kennedy hoped that he would at least be prepared for the foreseeable contingencies and know that—although no course of action is ever completely satisfactory—he had made his decision based on the best possible information. His conduct of the missile crisis showed how important this kind of skeptical probing and questioning could be.

It also showed how important it was to be respected around the world, how vital it was to have allies and friends. Now, five years later, I discern a feeling of isolationism in Congress and through the country, a feeling that we are too involved with other nations, a resentment of the fact that we do not have greater support in Vietnam, an impression that our AID program is useless and our alliances dangerous. I think it would be well to think back to those days in October, 1962.

We have not always had the support of Latin American countries in everything we have done. Frequently, our patience has been sorely tried by the opposition of some of the larger South American countries to measures we felt to be in our common interest and worthy of their support. During the Cuban missile crisis, however, when it was an issue of the greatest importance, when the United States was being sorely tried, those countries came unanimously to our support, and that support was essential.

It was the vote of the Organization of American States that gave a legal basis for the quarantine. Their willingness to follow the leadership of the United States was a heavy and unexpected blow to Khrushchev. It had a major psychological and practical effect on the Russians and changed our position from that of an outlaw acting in violation of international law into a country acting in accordance wtih twenty allies legally protecting their position.

Similarly, the support of our NATO allies—the rapid public acceptance of our position by Adenauer, De Gaulle, and Macmillan—was of great importance. They accepted our recitation of the facts without question and publicly supported our position without reservation. Had our relationship of trust and mutual respect not been present, had our NATO allies been skeptical about what we were doing and its implications for them, and had Khrushchev thus been able to split off the NATO countries or even one of our chief allies, our position would have been seriously undermined.

Even in Africa, support from a number of countries that had been considered antagonistic toward the United States was of great significance. With a naval quarantine around Cuba, our

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military reported, Soviet planes could still fly atomic warheads into Cuba. To do so they had to refuel in North Africa, and the critical countries with sufficiently large airports and the necessary refueling facilities were Guinea and Senegal. President Kennedy sent our two Ambassadors to see the Presidents of those two countries.

Sekou Touré, of Guinea, had been the subject of great criticism in the United States because of his friendship with the Communist nations; but he also admired President Kennedy. When our Ambassador visited him, he immediately accepted as true President Kennedy's description of what was happening in Cuba; said Guinea was not going to assist any country in constructing a military base on foreign soil; and announced that Russian planes would not be permitted to refuel in Conakry.

In Dakar, Ambassador Philip M. Kaiser had a close personal relationship with President Leopold Senghor, who a short time before had had a very successful visit to Washington. He, too, quickly perceived the danger and agreed not to permit Russian planes to land or refuel in Dakar.

In short, our friends, our allies, and, as Thomas Jefferson said, a respect for the opinions of mankind, are all vitally important. We cannot be an island even if we wished; nor can we successfully separate ourselves from the rest of the world.

Exasperation over our struggle in Vietnam should not close our eyes to the fact that we could have other missile crises in the future—different kinds, no doubt, and under different circumstances. But if we are to be successful then, if we are going to preserve our own national security, we will need friends, we will need supporters, we will need countries that believe and respect us and will follow our leadership.

The final lesson of the Cuban missile crisis is the importance of placing ourselves in the other country's shoes. During the crisis, President Kennedy spent more time trying to determine the effect of a particular course of action on Khrushchev or the Russians than on any other phase of what he was doing. What guided all his deliberations was an effort not to disgrace Khrushchev, not to humiliate the Soviet Union, not to have them feel they would have to escalate their response because their national security or national interests so committed them.

This was why he was so reluctant to stop and search a Russian ship; this was why he was so opposed to attacking the missile sites. The Russians, he felt, would have to react militarily to such actions on our part.

Thus the initial decision to impose a quarantine rather than to attack; our decision to permit the *Bucharest* to pass; our decision to board a non-Russian vessel first; all these and many more were taken with a view to putting pressure on the Soviet Union but not causing a public humiliation.

Miscalculation and misunderstanding and escalation on one side bring a counterresponse. No action is taken against a powerful adversary in a vacuum. A government or people will fail to understand this only at their great peril. For that is how wars begin—wars that no one wants, no one intends, and no one wins.

Each decision that President Kennedy made kept this in mind. Always he asked himself: Can we be sure that Khrushchev understands what we feel to be our vital national interest? Has the Soviet Union had sufficient time to react soberly to a particular step we have taken? All action was judged against that standard—stopping a particular ship, sending low-flying planes, making a public statement.

President Kennedy understood that the Soviet Union did not want war, and they understood that we wished to avoid armed conflict. Thus, if hostilities were to come, it would be either because our national interests collided—which, because of their limited interests and our purposely limited objectives, seemed unlikely—or because of our failure or their failure to understand the other's objectives.

President Kennedy dedicated himself to making it clear to Khrushchev by word and deed—for both are important—that the U.S. had limited objectives and that we had no interest in accomplishing those objectives by adversely affecting the national security of the Soviet Union or by humiliating her.

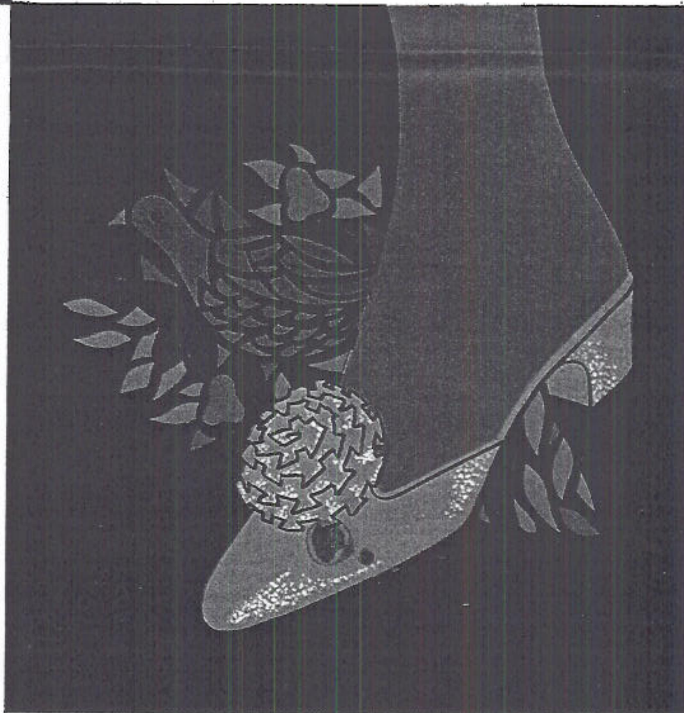
Later, he was to say in his speech at American University in June of 1963: "Above all, while defending our own vital interests, nuclear powers must avert those confrontations which bring an adversary to the choice of either a humiliating defeat or a nuclear war."

During our crisis talks, he kept stressing the fact that we would indeed have war if we placed the Soviet Union in a position she believed would adversely affect her national security or such public humiliation that she lost the respect of her own people and countries around the globe. The missiles in Cuba, we felt, vitally concerned our national security, but not that of the Soviet Union.

This fact was ultimately recognized by Khrushchev, and this recognition, I believe, brought about his change in what, up to that time, had been a very adamant position. The President believed from the start that the Soviet Chairman was a rational, intelligent man who, if given sufficient time and shown our determination, would alter his position. But there was always the chance of error, of mistake, miscalculation, or misunderstanding, and President Kennedy was committed to doing everything possible to lessen that chance on our side.

As mentioned before, he had been tremendously impressed by Barbara Tuchman's *The Guns of August,* and the miscalculation and misunderstanding of the Russians, the Austrians, the Germans, the French, and the British which that book revealed. He was determined that no comparable book would be written on the miscalculations of that October, that "if anybody is around to write after this, they are going to understand that we made every effort to find peace and every effort to give our adversary room to move. I am not going to push the Russians an inch beyond what is necessary."

Even after it was all over, he permitted no crowing that would cause the Soviet to eat crow. He made no statement attempting to take credit for himself or for his Administration for what had occurred. He instructed all members of the Ex-Comm and government that no interview should be given, no statement made, which would claim any kind of victory. He respected Khrushchev for properly determining what was in his own country's interest and what was in the interest of mankind. If it was a triumph, it was a triumph for the next generation and not for any particular government or people. THE END



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