

going "largely without response from the West." Khrushchev's own perspective on this confirms O'Donnells: In his autobiography Khrushchev Remembers he wrote: "I'll always remember the late President with deep respect because, in the final analysis, he showed himself to be sober-minded and determined to avoid war. . . He showed real wisdom and statesmanship when he turned his back on right-wing forces in the United States who were trying to goad him into taking military action against Cuba. It was a great victory for us. . . ." Khrushchev confirmed this appraisal further on:

"As for Kennedy, his death was a great loss. He was gifted with the ability to resolve international conflicts by negotiation, as the whole world learned during the so-called Cuban crisis. . . I believe that if Kennedy had lived, relations between the Soviet Union and the United States would be much better than they are. Why do I say that? Because Kennedy would never have let his country get bogged down in Vietnam."

Edward Crankshaw in his biography of Khrushchev wrote that with the understanding that developed between Kennedy and Khrushchev, "Khrushchev was once more the world statesman, moving back to the spirit of Camp David - and beyond. His great aim now was to liquidate all possible obstacles to a further improvement of relations with America." But "The assassination of President Kennedy in November 1963 had been a shattering blow." Without the united endeavor with Kennedy for world peace Khrushchev's part in this endeavor was vulnerable to the Soviet hawks and he was displaced from Russia's leadership.

In his book The Pleasure of his Company President Kennedy's Assistant Secretary of the Navy Paul Fay Jr. told of asking the President if he were not concerned about a possible military takeover of the country. Kennedy had answered "If there were a third Bay of Pigs, it could happen." And he commented "only God knows just what segment of democracy they would be defending if they overthrew the elected establishment."

The CIA organized invasion at the Bay of Pigs had been prepared by the Eisenhower administration and was inherited by the Kennedy administration. Kennedy had been sold on going ahead with it on the understanding that it was a U.S. supported popular uprising that would take place and not an invasion by the United States armed forces comparable to the Soviet takeover in Czechoslovakia. So Kennedy had refused to allow the involvement of the United States air force. This refusal to allow the Bay of Pigs to initiate a governmental armed invasion of Cuba had embittered the CIA and the military command. Kennedy again refused to allow the armed forces to invade Cuba as the outcome of the missile crisis, but came to the accommodation with Russia that Khrushchev praised so highly. This constituted in effect the second "bay of pigs" so far as the military leadership was concerned.

George Kennon saw but one aspect of the Cuban missile crisis in writing of it

"In the U*2 episode and the Cuban missile crisis the two great nuclear powers traded fateful mistakes, further confirming each other's conviction that armed forces and armed force alone, would eventually determine the outcome of their differences. . . In short, what was brewed is the dreadful militarization of the entire East-West relationship."

President Kennedy's resolution of the missile crisis was precisely to avoid that outcome, and Khrushchev clearly understood this was the case. But to the military, the resolution of the missile crisis and Kennedy's determination to get out of Vietnam were a second bay of pigs happened and a third in prospect. Hence the necessity in their thinking of making a transition from Kennedy's world peace perspective to Lyndon Johnson's dependable teamwork with the military establishment. So it was no accident that an army general was present at the navy autopsy of President Kennedy's body and ordered the autopsy prematurely terminated--as one of the medical officers testified in court in New Orleans. The evidence of a conspiracy resulting in cross fire from two assassins was in this way avoided.

This is the page of world history that George Kennon left out, leaving a mistaken appraisal of both Khrushchev's and the United States' part in the abortive move to end the threat of nuclear war and conflict between the two superpowers.

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