

Dear Jerry, re: On The Brink

3/19/89

Between innings of the ball game I read the first two pages of the Prologue and I was reminded of what I told you, that with ^{the} George Bundy writing the preface the ^{found} book would be favorable to the U.S. position or not unfavorable to it, I've forgotten which. I found what I regard as confirmation on the first page, their statement that Khrushchev's reaction to our announcement of discovery of the missiles was of shock. On its face, aside from reflecting the attitude I anticipated, this cannot be serious analysis. Serious ~~analysis~~ analysis should have led the authors to believe that it is more likely that Khrushchev should have been surprised it took so long for them to have been discovered. On the second page they say that, more or less, we were inclined to accept Khrushchev's initial offer of a solution. My recollection ~~may~~ be wrong but it is my recollection that the excom and JFK were not then inclined to accept his offer. I think also that given the climate if we'd been inclined to accept there would have been some kind of rapid indication of it, to prevent what was at any time the clear possibility of a great disaster. So, reminded of its existence by their footnote, I checked their chronology. From the top there are grave omissions ranging from any reference to what Cuba was saying at the UN about aggressive US acts and even the forecast of the Bay of Pigs to any single reference to any single US aggressive act except for a very neutral statement of the Bay of Pigs invasion. I skimmed the chronology after this and there is no mention of any aggressive act, not even of Mongoose and the publicly known attempts to assassinate Castro.

Perhaps an instant analysis like this is not dependable but we'll see as I read the book.

I expect it to be favorable to the positions of U.S. participants in the conference as well as, by and large, earlier and official representations of the U.S. position. This is not to say that I expect their reporting to be inaccurate. But by omissions as those I've indicated can influence the readers' understanding of the history they recount, so also can they by their comments and interpretations and opinions.

9/20/89 After finishing the prologue and beginning the first chapter my feeling that this book is designedly partial to the U.S. position has grown and I'm satisfied it is correct when I come to (page 32): "... what caused the Cuban missile crisis was captured concisely in the following statement (by CBS News): "...the presence of Soviet missiles capable of changing the balance of power..."

There was no "balance" of power to be changed. It was the imbalance of power heavily in favor of the U.S. that could have been changed then by the presence of those Soviet missiles in Cuba.

There is partisanship in the allegation that it was the presence of those missiles that "caused" the crisis. From the USSR's and I think any genuinely impartial and scholarly point of view it is what as far as I've gone and looked is entirely absent - U.S. gross violations of international law in its aggressive policies and acts against Cuba. Consistent with this belief is the entire absence in the chronology to any act by the U.S. until, only five days before the Bay of Pigs invasion this item: "... (JFK) pledges the U.S. will not intervene militarily to overthrow Castro." Four days later Castro's mobilization order and announcement that the US plans an invasion and the day after that the invasion. (That gets back to the total absence here and in anything I've read at any time on the crisis of any reference to what Cuba was alleging, especially regularly at the UN. The Bay of Pigs and what preceded it; missing in this chronology is the U.S. air attacks on Cuba intended to wipe its small air force out.)

The authors' classifications of doves and hawks is subject to question and there are some he does not classify as either, like Bundy and Musk, who they say bent their efforts toward preventing hasty action. The first "hasty" action that was prevented is what brought the world to the brink of self-destruction because there were genuine doves,

not only those gung ho! for an invasion of Cuba or aerial attacks on it. Adlai Stevenson correctly understood the actualities of the situation and his proposed solution, as + now recall it, was in essence the ultimate solution. He was attacked viciously for this and among those attacking and their associates and like-minded never recovered his reputation. Then CIA head John McCone held a similar view until it was changed, + presume under peer and CIA bureaucrat pressure. If these two are considered doves then the hawks are Bundy and "usk. It is only by comparison with those who wanted to launch a war immediately that those two can be considered dovish.

Certainly at the beginning of a book intended to enlighten on that grave crisis there ought be some mention of the extraordinary acts of the Eisenhower administration, particularly the truly exceptional act of breaking relations only 17 days before the new administration took office. It without question boxed the new administration into the policies and acts of the outgoing administration, eliminated all other options that could be considered by the incoming administration.

With no chron item for the last two years of the outgoing administration - the first is Batista's fall and the second and only other item, Cuba's announcement of its alignment with the USSR - the uninformed or unthinking reader is not aware of all that the U.S. was and had been doing; its effort to bankrupt Cuba while bleeding it economically, with the refusal of the US oil companies with refineries in Cuba to handle crude Cuba was buying from others at enormously less than the US corporations were charging, the straw that broke Cuba's economic back not even indicated. That is what triggered what also is omitted, Cuba's nationalizations, particularly of the refineries.

No matter how fairly the authors treat the conference they begin with unscholarly and I think intellectually dishonest partisanship in favor the U.S. position that is represented by the U.S. participants. They begin in a manner calculated to impose their partisanship on readers and on interpretations that can of will be made of their recollections of that crisis and their positions and arguments of that period.

I noticed also that the chronology does not include the professional historians account, Schlesinger's, or any of the daily papers, like the New York Times. (page 371) +t also does not include the earlier writings of some of those whose books it did use, like Hilsman's. I do not recall that what he wrote for the mass circulation Look magazine, which distributed more than 7,000,000 copies but I do suggest that his and other such much earlier accounts could have differed from accounts prepared later and after much thought some of which could have been self-serving. From the time McCone changed his position my belief, based on what I recall from that period, is that none, not a single one, really served the resident well; that none was willing to consider the realities, international law (which was violated even by the "quarantine") or any solution not based on U.S. power and the willingness to use it.

Given the significance it was to assume I think there should have been some exposition of what is "defensive" and what is "offensive" - of how the US could claim that our missiles in Turkey (the authors refer to them as NATO's, not ours), right on the USSR's borders, are only defensive while those in Cuba are only offensive. (This was a major factor in what the US said in public and what was argued in private. It was a major argument when no part of the press even questioned anything the government said and in fact argued that what we do is defensive and what the USSR does, not matter how identical, is offensive.) I think that such omissions in preparing the reader and scholars of the future to understand the discussion and that part of history reflect authors prejudices in favor of the US position, something less than intended impartiality and detachment in their approach.

I am not going to make notes on the entire book. I'm stopping at the end of the first session, page 45. What I have in mind is showing students two things in particular, that on the basis of quite meager evidence it is possible to make instant analyses that are accurate (as I did as soon as I saw McNamara foreword on the dust jacket) and that first-rank authorities often fail in simple analyses because of their own personal involvements and positions they have taken in the past.

Bearing on what I've told you in the past is a mere passing reference to the fact that Admiral Anderson said in September, the month before the crisis, that the USSR was putting missiles in Cuba. (27) ^{he knew}

By the time I got to page 34 I was satisfied that not one of the participants was trying to think as Khrushchev thought, tried to assess his problems as he, not they, saw them or to understand (his purposes as he, not they, saw his purposes. All of their thinking, all of their comment, is in terms of U.S. perceptions, including of his problems and his purposes.

Taubman, in casting about, in his thinking about Khrushchev's objectives did include "defending Cuba," McNamara ~~and~~, again in passing, did admit that this could have been a "secondary" objective (he evaluated the earlier Berlin crisis as a main cause), and Garthoff acknowledged that this (i.e., a secondary objective) "is true to some extent" and a "secondary consideration and a later consideration" to "justify" what he did, but none of them indicate any belief that Khrushchev's real objective was, in their words, to "defend" Cuba against U.S. attack. *They do not admit that this goal existed.*

This gets to what I regard as a fundamental dishonesty - the omission of known and relevant factors. You noted one on page 47, alongside Chayes' comment that the decision to put missiles in Cuba was made in May of June of 1962 - Moongoose was earlier, of that March. However, there is no mention of Moongoose in the chronology and ~~thence~~ to this point there has not been any mention of it by any participant in the conference. Nor has any participant made any reference to any act, particularly any provocative or aggressive act, by the U.S. Two only are noted in the chronology.

Their reasoning ignores what is in the chronology, Castro's July 27, 1962 statement that Cuba was taking measures that would make any attack on it the equivalent of a world war. (I note that his intelligence was good enough for him to have mobilized the day before the Bay of Pigs invasion, as the chronology does reflect.)

These participants are still thinking in terms of justifying U.S. actions that could have virtually ended the world. They are not thinking in terms of learning so that any such catastrophe might be avoided in the future. And to this point in their conference they are all, each and every one of them, incapable of putting themselves in the position of their adversary and trying to think as he would have thought, trying to perceive his objectives as he might have perceived them.

In even small details they are less than forthright and they allege we were deceived by the USSR which allegedly said it would not introduce offensive weapons. There is more mention of Gromyko's meeting with JFK on the eve of the crisis. I recall it quite well. He said that the USSR was providing Cuba with only defensive weapons. JFK and others later said this was deliberate deception because the missiles were offensive. They used this to inflame our people. I think the participants steer away from this because it cannot be argued that our missiles on the USSR's borders are defensive while their missiles near us are only offensive. Our government had to deceive and mislead the people because the crisis was the consequence of U.S. initiatives, provocative and aggressive.

While there is some reference to the Berlin crisis there is not a single word that reflects what caused it and there is no effort made at even this late date to understand why Khrushchev took that step. There is no indication from the conferees that JFK went to

his conference with Khrushchev determined to heed his advisers and show Khrushchev just how tough he and we were - the only thing the USSR understood, in the conventional wisdom. Nor was there any indication of our side expecting any reaction to the deliberate drain from East Germany of its more skilled people, an economic disaster for it that was ended by the wall.

In a sense reading these selections from this first session is frightening because it really says that after 25 years our supposed best brains still did not really understand what had happened, what had caused it or how such a frightful crisis might again be created.

Another comment on participant partiality and dishonesty: "quarantine." There is no such thing under international law. It is a title invented to circumvent the fact that a blockade, which is what it really was, is an act of war.

The Soviets had as much legal right to place missiles in Cuba as we did to place them anywhere outside our own borders. They had a legal right to place them in Cuba. We did not have a legal right to blockade Cuba. And that blockade was an act of war. There is no discussion of this. Until the second session reference is to the alleged quarantine. The second session begins with any honest reference to it, still without discussion, as a blockade.

3/23/89 After speaking to you yesterday I skipped immediately to Chapter 5 on the Cambridge conference. It is entirely different for two reasons; the remarkable forthrightness and openness of the USSR's people and the greatly increased honesty by the Americans who were less inclined to justify themselves although they still did to a great degree. At the end although the US delegation had moved much toward a full understanding of the crisis and what led to it they still have not been able to formulate and articulate even to themselves any basic recognition of US responsibility for it. The still cling to the self-deception that Khrushchev's adventurism, the word taken from Mikoyan, is what really caused it. There still was not a word on US policy and acts that at the least triggered what Khrushchev did. For example, on page 289, Nye blames that crisis on "unclear communication of interests with a gambling man." There was no such unclear communication from the other side and there was none at all by our side. There was no mention at all of the obligations Khrushchev had with Castro. Yet in even this pathetically inadequate (I think to the point of dishonesty) of the chronology, its first 1962 item is the OAS action against Cuba for which the US was entirely responsible. Next is JFK declaration of an embargo against Cuba. Then what is not relevant if the ~~USSR~~ US was not aware of it then, the May item that Khrushchev was considering putting missiles in Cuba (but in this regard, the US participants knew that two months earlier we had started Mongoose); then the Cuban delegation to Moscow, which I'm sure is not the first knowledge the US had that Castro was seeking help from the USSR (July); and then Castro's July 27 statement that "Cuba was taking measures that would make any direct attack on Cuba the equivalent of a world war." If this were all, and it is far from all, what further "communication of interests" did the US need? Yet without any dissent from any US participant Nye concludes with this childish self-justification and again keys that to Khrushchev's alleged character. Our side still did not face the realities of what our side was responsible for.

I found additional confirmation of the accuracy of my contemporaneous analysis in what was said, particularly by the USSR people. I was quite correct in my belief that Khrushchev was not trusting his own diplomacy to handle what he started. Dobrynin did not know a thing about it. I thought that was clear at the time and I was satisfied when we learned that Khrushchev had gotten his own man, I then presumed KGB, to make his offer through John Scali. They could not have selected a less imaginative, more orthodox US attitude than Scali's. When I read the article he wrote on this I was impressed that even then he didn't understand what he'd been involved in.

Burlatsky ~~was~~ says on 229 what I've been saying for years, that in all armaments the USSR was only keeping up with the Joneses and was not taking leads or initiatives. It was only catching up.

I found his opinion on why Khrushchev did what he did more suitable for a play or a novel and he attributes it to nuclear parity, without asking himself what the US response would be. He knew perfectly what what the range of US responses could be and he was right. He knew also, I am sure, that the US could have launched a war, perhaps even missiles, but that it would not. Burlatsky is sure that this business was not discussed with the ~~Praxidium~~ (235) and ~~had~~ had discussed it with "maybe two, Malinovsky and Mikoyan." He does make this one passing reference to their "responsibilities to the Cubans, especially after the "Day of Pigs." But even then he could not see how the successful outcome of what Khrushchev launched could lead to detente. Even after it did! Mikoyan says the same thing (239) and that the main purpose "was the defense of Cuba."

I was correct also in believing that Khrushchev did not intend for his missiles to be used. (241) Mikoyan says, "Well, the idea was that their very existence would deter an American invasion. It would not be necessary to launch them." This is true and it worked that way.

What Shakhnazarov says about the causes (257) also confirms what I had believed, and no US participant disputed that it was the US attitude policies and acts.

That even Mikoyan lacked full understanding is reflected in what he says about warheads in Cuba. I am aware that he is quoted from the recent Moscow conference as saying warheads were there but here it is only a ~~belief~~ belief for which he had no proof at all. ~~He~~ said that "surely" there were warheads there. Burlatsky says, "I'm not so sure. Who told you?" Mikoyan's response is "Well, it would have been senseless to have missiles there ~~but~~ but no warheads." Taubman then reflects a glimmer of understanding that he does not carry forward. (Nor does any other US participant!): "No, it wouldn't. It could have been a bluff." But look at the logic. There would be no point -" he is interrupted by (U.S. rep.) Lebow, "Not necessarily; if we believed there were warheads there, then you would have the deterrent value of the missiles." When Mikoyan says only that "I am sure there were warheads there" Burlatsky asks why, says it is opinion only and "I am sure we did not (his emphasis) have warheads in Cuba." When McNamara ~~say~~ says that without warheads they'd run all the risks, Nye disagrees and points out "There's one risk they wouldn't run, though, Bob, and that is the risk of an inadvertent nuclear launch." (274) Apparently nobody recalled what Khrushchev had earlier said on this, particularly about a madman. And the rest of this discussion established that there was no control against accidental or irresponsible launch of USSR missiles.

That the USSR participants were not aware of whether or not there were warheads indicates strongly the exceptional degree ~~of~~ which Khrushchev kept what he was doing secret. He didn't even trust his own side in any area, from being able to proceed with his plan to keeping it secret. Contrary to the ~~generalities~~ ^{generalities}, such as McNamara's in his closing statement, or the importance of keeping the other side fully informed, and as a generality for today perhaps he is right, even with the Reagans and Bushes we spew up, I think the exact opposite was true in 1962 and that it was only the secrecy and control that led to the successful end of that crisis.

I don't recall any single reference to or acknowledgement of by any US participants of what the US was and had been doing that motivated Khrushchev. ~~Shakhnazarov~~ Shakhnazarov goes into some of these causes on 257 and no US participant has anything to say about it. Or, for all the progress in their thinking and understanding, they still were not willing to try to confront the realities and their responsibilities of that terrible days.

The sixth and last chapter, the end of the book, is not a fair or impartial summary or analysis of the conference so unprecedented in its nature and content. It rather is a continuation of the implicit and explicit argument that by and large the U.S. position and conduct were correct and that the Excom's deliberations were rational and reasonable. The authors are so biased, I think so unscholarly, that toward the end of the part of this chapter preceding the subsection "The Conduct and Resolution of the Crisis" they refer to the "mendacity of the Soviet deployment." What in the deployment the USSR was untruthful or lied about is not stated and the reason is that it cannot be stated. The USSR made no statement about it until Khrushchev later stated his reasons - and that they are valid reasons is established by the fact that they are his first offer of settlement and the enhancement of his offer in the US proposal that was the settlement. Suppose, in considering this, that the U.S. had immediately accepted his offer to withdraw the missiles if the US guaranteed not to invade Cuba? Had he any other objective, would he not have lost it by his own offer? And did the US not enhance it, a matter to here not referred to, by extending the guarantee to protect Cuba against any invasion, a promise the USSR itself could not make and keep? Is it not entirely unscholarly and violently biased to infer that USSR missiles in Cuba are offensive and the US's in Turkey are defensive? So, wherein is this alleged mendacity? And how impartial is their analysis and comment when their own chronology for 1961 states that only five days before the Bay of Pigs invasion JFK "pledges the U.S. will not intervene militarily to overthrow Castro? How impartial are they when I've seen no reference to Mongoose or to any US plot to assassinate Castro?

Not to mark the book up, I've copied the first few pages of this chapter and made a few notes some of which may not be fully legible. I add a few comments to them.

As the Excom before had not, the US participants have not, on their own, considered that defense of Cuba was Khrushchev's motive in putting missiles in Cuba. They have not on their own acknowledged that what is right for the US under international law is also right for the USSR. Instead they actually argue against this and draw on sources of obvious partiality to advance their argument.

There is no assessment of the rationality of the reasons, conjectured reasons by the US, for anyone risking a nuclear holocaust for these conjectured reasons. ~~Like~~ Like the long-past Berlin crisis or domestic considerations for the USSR (which, incidentally, the USSR participants noted were the opposite of reality. ~~Khrushchev~~ Khrushchev was then stronger at home than he had ever been.)

They repeatedly emphasize questions of Khrushchev's rationality and although without access to the full transcript of the conversations we cannot know all that was said, it appears to me that their selections are designed, as I felt as soon as I saw that Bundy contributed the foreword, to support the US position and the Excom and its deliberations and advice.

They even argue that the US planned to invade Cuba because it had no such intentions. Again, no mention of Mongoose or of Congressional hearings while they draw on such partisan sources as Horelick and Ulam.

Their "eight dominant theories" of the cause of the crisis appear on 293-4. and in the assessment of them they do not mention Khrushchev's first proposal or the agreed-to settlement. What actually happened is not relevant but the ludicrous, the fifth "reason," is "to restore Soviet preeminence in the socialist world" and the sixth, to "boost the morale and prestige in the Soviet bloc" is.

Students may not know enough to be able to evaluate bias and faithfulness on page 306 but I think it is biased and unfaithful to fact, largely in what it is not honest enough to state and instead infers. Kennedy's speech was 10/22. "When Khrushchev finally repóded..." the authors say. Finally when at most there was only a day, perhaps only part of a day, between Kennedy's speech and his response? The next sentence referring to his response employs such words as "salvo" and "barrage." It implies that what Khrushchev

missile crisis better than in any other event since 1941. Now, this is in part a tribute to the candor of the commentary, but it is also an indication of how little we really know about Soviet decisionmaking in general. There is so much important detail to know that we've never even dreamed about. I hope this meeting is symptomatic of a real opportunity not only to learn about the Cuban missile crisis, but about other important Cold War events as well. I noted this morning how Fashoda shocked Britain and France into an understanding which helped lay the groundwork for a later alliance; I hope we can learn a lot more about this and other important events—especially about the German issue, by the way, which I think has been central to U.S.–Soviet conflict through most of the postwar period—so that we can reduce misunderstandings and ease international tensions. The more we know about the history of our relationship, the better off we are all going to be.

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NYE: . . . [This] has been an extraordinarily useful and exciting day. If this is what *glasnost* means, then I think it bodes very well not only for the better understanding of history but also for the future of U.S.–Soviet relations. . . . Let me congratulate you all for a job exceedingly well done. Thank you all for coming. [Applause.]

CHAPTER 6

Another October Revolution

The poet Dylan Thomas remembered October as the month in Wales when "the weather turned around."¹ On the eve of the seventieth anniversary of the revolution that brought the Bolsheviks to power in Russia, and almost exactly on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Cuban missile crisis, another October revolution took place in a small conference room in Cambridge, Massachusetts—this time, a revolution in U.S.–Soviet scholarly relations, and in our understanding of the Cuban missile crisis. The meeting shed a great deal of light on such perplexing issues as the Soviet decision to deploy missiles in Cuba, the conduct of the crisis from the Soviet perspective, and the scope and implications of U.S. and Soviet misunderstandings about one another's motives and intentions. It also represented a serious, honest, cooperative investigation of issues central to the key interests of the superpowers, and to the problems of war and peace in the nuclear age. In October 1987, "the weather turned around"—unexpectedly, as usual—with a heady blast of *glasnost*.

Fyodor Burlatsky set the tone for the rest of the conference in his frank response to Ernest May's long list of questions on Monday morning. Burlatsky took the position that Khrushchev may have put the missiles in Cuba for what he called "irrational reasons," that Khrushchev did not think through the implications of what he was doing, that he had a very poor understanding of the likely American response, that in fact Khrushchev took unnecessary risks, and that many in the Soviet Union regarded the emplacement of missiles in Cuba as what the Soviets disparagingly call an "adventurist" act.² Sergo Mikoyan then methodically described the Soviet decisionmaking process that led to the emplacement of missiles in Cuba, as told to him by his father. Soviet First

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said is without basis in fact but it was quite solidly based and was completely accurate. The US did "violate" the UN charter and international norms, including freedom of navigation. Thereafter the authors refer to the "quarantine" but they never say that under international law there is no such thing, that it was an invented description to avoid what it actually was, a "blockade" and that does violate law and norms. Pravda's headlines, to the authors, "screamed." It is "ominous" to them that Khrushchev denounced the "quarantine" as "banditry" but they do not address whether or not, under international law, it was this. They thereby imply that once again Khrushchev was wrong and irrational and the US was right in what it did. To make this appear to be so and once again to say that the US "won" the crisis, they quote Rusk on blinking. To further this misrepresentation they still make no reference to the final solution.

To me this is not scholarship. It is propaganda disguised as scholarship.

They continue to argue and misrepresent in their interpretations. On Khrushchev's response to JFK's letter of the 25th, in which he describes the consequences of the two wars in which he fought, they quote Khrushchev on this extensively but when they get to his proposal for a settlement they do not quote. They describe it as "vague" without saying how. There is no vagueness in their own paraphrase of it: "the missiles in Cuba would be withdrawn in return for an American pledge not to invade Cuba." They say there are "terms Kennedy and the Excom could accept." Only they didn't! Which they do not say. (Earlier they represented that JFK did not have enough time but Khrushchev's long letter was the next day and by the next day JFK had not even indicated this was a proposal that could be discussed. Then they continue to argue that what he got was not what Khrushchev wanted but that "it seems (he) had made up his mind that securing one of his goals - the defense of Cuba - was all he could reasonably hope for..." They have built throughout on their selection and arguments that this was not Khrushchev's objective, then maybe it was a secondary objective, and now they have him backing down so they could represent a US victory and up with the Excom!

There is no end to the double-standard scholarship. On page 309 they lament that "...when John Scali was sent to ask Aleksander Fomin why the (acceptable) proposal of July 26 had been superseded by the missile-trade proposal before the President had even had a chance to reply," this is the same time lag - or more - than led them to say that when he replied overnight Khrushchev had "finally" replied. They say "acceptable" but the fact is that it was not accepted nor was Khrushchev given even a hint that it was being considered. Later on this page they refer to "an American non-invasion pledge," of which there had not been any. As though to imply that there had been one they have a footnote, but that footnote could have been in the text, without another footnote, because it only refers to page 254, where there is no citation of any such pledge. They could say, of course, that they had something else in mind, like the discussion of the missile-swap proposal. And still having made no reference to the ultimate solution, they quote Michael Tatu as saying this was "the most important Soviet blunder" when in fact it resulted in greater guarantees than the USSR had demanded. Which they still have not reported or commented on. Or, nothing fails like success to scholars.

This section headed "resolution" in fact has not a single word to say about that resolution, to which I've referred as its solution. It continues to argue, slants and twists fact to argue, and blames Khrushchev for mistakes when he succeeded and even says that at the end - which is not once mentioned in any way - he "must have realized that his position was no longer tenable and that further delays were unwarranted." What delay by Khrushchev? All he did was sit back and wait for JFK to promise him more than he'd asked for! He refers to "panic" in Khrushchev's small group and says they could not risk solving the ambiguity - which did not exist. Khrushchev did nothing after offering the Cuba-Turkey missile swap. Not a single thing! He sat, he waited and he got more than he'd asked for.

Confirming my recollection, however, is their statement that Khrushchev rushed his answer - to what is not even hinted at - to Radio Moscow. I recalled telegraphy. I presume

that this was the text of what Khrushchev said as it was broadcast by Radio Moscow.

The last section of this chapter is on the education of both leaders. It still does not mention a word about the solution of how it was reached, who formulated it and under what circumstances or even that JFK sent a proposal to Khrushchev. This is one hell of a scholarly way to write an entire book on how the world was "On the Brink" of a nuclear holocaust - without a word on the solution that got them away from that brink. Nor is there a single word on the publicly-known and quite extensive subsequent correspondence between the debrinked leaders. Unless it is in the short Epilogue. They have argued that Khrushchev was wrong, irrational, a gambler, and that we won. So they begin the epilogue by saying that while it is customary to end with a summary of its conclusions they won't do it, and they don't, although they do argue a bit more.

I think this book will succeed in arguing a preconceived line and that most of those who read it will not be able to read it critically or that those who are equipped will not do so because of its pretended evenness and avoidance of blaming.

I've at several points alleged dishonesty and I am aware that others may not agree. I note that the book entirely avoids any mention of what happened after they allege the terrible blunder Khrushchev in offering the missile swap and I say that this cannot be regarded as honest, whether or not it was discussed at Cambridge because large sections from at best dubious sources are quoted throughout, and they were not quoted from the Cambridge conference. There is nothing I can see compatible with honesty or the intent to try to be honest that permits writing a book about that crisis without a single word on how it was solved, how it ended.