

I cannot agree with your statement that you have fulfilled your commitments and that we have not fulfilled ours. Let us recall what, in fact, has occurred. You have removed a certain number of missiles from Cuba—not under United Nations supervision—but you did cooperate in arrangements which enabled us to be reasonably sure that forty-two missiles were in fact taken out of Cuba. There has been no United Nations verification that other missiles were not left behind and, in fact, there have been many reports of their being concealed in caves and elsewhere, and we have no way of satisfying those who are concerned about these reports. The IL-28's are still in Cuba and are of deep concern to the people of our entire Hemisphere. Thus, three major parts of the undertakings on your side—the removal of the IL-28's, the arrangements for verification, and safeguards against introduction—have not yet been carried out.

We suppose that part of the trouble here may be in Cuba. The Secretary General of the United Nations was not allowed to make arrangements for the experts he took with him to Cuba to verify removal of the offensive weapons,<sup>3</sup> the Cuban Government did not agree to international Red Cross inspection at ports; they have refused the Secretary General's suggestion that the Latin American Ambassadors in Havana undertake this verification; they have rejected a further suggestion of the Secretary General concerning the use of various non-aligned Chiefs of Mission in Havana for this purpose. It is difficult for me to understand why the Cubans are so resistant to the series of reasonable proposals that have been made to them by U Thant unless, for reasons of their own, they are determined to see the crisis prolonged and worsened. We both have means of influencing the Cuban Government and I do not believe that we can allow that Government to frustrate the clear understandings our two governments have reached in the interests of peace.

In these circumstances we have so far been patient and careful, as we have been, indeed, at every stage. As you know from your own reports, we have always applied the quarantine with care and with regard for the position of others, and in recent days we have relied on the oral assurances of the masters of your ships and other ships. Moreover I myself held back orders for more forceful action right to the limit of possibility during the week of October 27th and 28th. But we cannot make progress from here—or avoid a return of danger to this situation—if your side now should fall into the mistake of claiming that it has met all its commitments, and refusing to help with the real business of carrying out our purpose of untying the Cuban knot.

What, in those circumstances, should be done? We are entitled to insist on removal of the IL-28's and on safeguards against reintroduction of offensive weapons before we lift the quarantine or give assurances of any sort. But we are interested in making rapid progress, step-by-step, and that is why we have proposed an arrangement more favorable from your standpoint: that as soon as you give the order for the removal of the IL-28's and their men and equipment, to be completed within thirty days, (and I am glad you say the length of time is not the real problem) we will announce the lifting of the quarantine. That is more

<sup>3</sup>See Document 3, footnote 2.

than we agreed to on October twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth, but we wish to end this crisis promptly.

Beyond that, we are quite willing to instruct our negotiators in New York<sup>4</sup> to work closely with yours in order to reach agreement on other matters affecting this problem. We believe, again, that these matters should follow the removal of offensive weapons systems, but just as we have been able to discuss other matters while a number of missiles were leaving, we believe the urgently needed talks can and should go forward while the bombers are leaving. We do not insist that everything wait its exact turn—but only that the essential first steps be clearly going forward.

But what is most urgent, after we can agree that offensive weapons are leaving, and after the quarantine is lifted, is to make some real progress on continuing observations and verification. It will be essential to have such arrangements—and this again is clear in the letters of October 27 and 28—before our assurances can be more formally stated. Our undertaking on this point remains firm and clear, and we want nothing better than to be able to give our assurances, just as we said we would, when the necessary conditions exist.

In the absence of any arrangements under the United Nations or otherwise for international verification or safeguards, we have of course been obliged to rely upon our own resources for surveillance of the situation in Cuba, although this course is unsatisfactory. Just today we learned of new threats by Castro against this necessary surveillance.<sup>5</sup> I should make it very clear that if there is any interference with this surveillance, we shall have to take the necessary action in reply, and it is for just this reason that it is so urgent to obtain better safeguards.

We note with interest that in your last message the arrangement of observation and verification is enlarged from Cuba to include certain other areas. This is a substantial change from the terms of our exchange of messages, and as we see it any such wider arrangements would necessarily require careful discussion. For example, if we move outside Cuba to observe what is happening in other countries which have been involved in the recent tensions, there might have to be observation posts at the appropriate ports in the Soviet Union from which weapons could be shipped to Cuba, as well as in appropriate places in the United States. This is a matter which deserves close study and it may offer a chance of real progress in the long run, but for the immediate future it seems to us better to work within the framework of our understanding of October 27 and 28.

We also think that the Brazilian proposal for a verified Denuclearized Zone in Latin America<sup>6</sup> could, with the cooperation of Cuba and if acceptable to the other Latin American countries, in the long run offer an acceptable means for a broader approach. However, the immediate problem is, I repeat, the carrying out of our understanding with regard to verification that offensive weapons have in

<sup>4</sup>Namely, John McCloy and Adlai Stevenson.

<sup>5</sup>Presumably a reference to the fact that on November 15 Cuban fighter aircraft were detected using low-level flight tactics in the Havana vicinity.

<sup>6</sup>On November 15 various Latin American countries, including Brazil, presented a revised version of this plan to the First Committee of the UN.

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fact been removed from Cuba and the establishing of safeguards against their reintroduction pending the coming into effect of longer-term arrangements. Even apart from our understanding, given the history of this matter, I am sure, Mr. Chairman, that you can understand that this is a real necessity if we are to move to the settlement of other matters.

But the first step is to get the [IL-28] bombers started out, and the quarantine lifted—for both are sources of tension. Meanwhile discussion can continue on other aspects of the problem.

## 17. Memorandum from Chairman of the JCS Taylor (on behalf of the Joint Chiefs) to President Kennedy

*The Joint Chiefs assure the president that the contingency plans to attack Cuba are up to date, and, by his instruction, the forces earmarked for an invasion of Cuba have been enlarged.*

Washington, November 16, 1962.

### SUBJECT

#### Status of Readiness for the Cuban Operation

1. The Joint Chiefs of Staff are glad to report that our Armed Forces are in an optimum posture to execute CINCLANT OPLANS 312-62 (Air Attack in Cuba) and 316-62 (Invasion of Cuba). We are not only ready to take any action you may order in Cuba, we are also in an excellent condition world-wide to counter any Soviet military response to such action. Our status of readiness includes:

a. SAC is maintaining 1/8 airborne alert and has implemented its force dispersal plan. . . .

b. Continental Air Defense Command interceptor forces have occupied their wartime dispersal bases and are partially deployed at increased alert (about 1/3). Special defensive measures have been taken to protect the Southeast, with particular attention to Florida.

c. Air forces involved in CINCLANT OPLAN 312-62 in daylight hours can respond for selective attack in graduated increments from two to twelve hours, according to the application of force desired.

d. Amphibious and assault forces are at a high state of readiness, providing a seven-day reaction capability for CINCLANT OPLAN 316-62 following the air strike (CINCLANT OPLAN 312-62), with accelerated introduction of follow-on forces.

e. All naval units are in a high state of readiness.

2. In response to your request,<sup>1</sup> we have studied the need for augmentation of forces for CINCLANT OPLAN 316-62 and have concluded that while the forces originally included in the plan are probably adequate, it would be prudent to earmark additional forces as a ready reserve for the operation. Accordingly, we are planning to earmark the 5th Infantry Division, at approximately 20,000 strength including supporting forces, and a combat command (strength 6,800) of the 2nd Armored Division for possible commitment as reserve forces for CINCLANT OPLAN 316-62. . . . The 5th MEB (Marine Expeditionary Brigade), at approximately 9,000 strength, has transited the Panama Canal, is in the Caribbean and has been added to the assault force. . . .

### 18. Message from Chairman Khrushchev to President Kennedy<sup>1</sup>

*On November 19 Robert Kennedy informed Georgi Bolshakov, a leading Washington-based KGB official, that the United States would resume low-level aircraft reconnaissance of the Cuban island if Khrushchev did not remove the IL-28 bombers; and that the president needed a response to this ultimatum before his press conference, scheduled for the following evening. Also on November 19, Fidel Castro informed U Thant that Cuba would not oppose the Soviet withdrawal of the IL-28s from the island. The next day Khrushchev was therefore able to dispatch a message to JFK agreeing to withdraw the IL-28s.*

Moscow, November 20, 1962.

I have studied attentively your considerations which were forwarded through our Ambassador in Washington in the evening of November 15.<sup>2</sup> I wish first of all to express satisfaction with regard to your statement that the United States is also interested in the achievement of a rapid progress in untying the Cuban knot. This is our great desire too. It is good that you have confirmed once again that the U.S. commitment to give assurance of non-invasion of Cuba, which was agreed upon in the exchange of messages on October 27 and 28 remains firm and clear. I fully share also the thought expressed by you about the necessity to act with caution, to take into consideration the position of others. Now when we speak of eliminating the remnants of the crisis this is as important as at any of its past stages.

<sup>1</sup>Presumably a reference to Document 10.

<sup>2</sup>Dobrynin handed Bobby Kennedy this message from Khrushchev at a November 20 meeting.

<sup>3</sup>See Document 16.

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I always believed and believe now that both of us are guided by the realization of the immense responsibility for the peaceful settlement of the crisis over Cuba being completed. The basis for such settlement already exists: the sides have achieved an agreement and have taken upon themselves certain obligations. It is precisely where we proceed from.

What have we agreed upon? In brief our agreement has come to the following.

The Soviet Union removes from Cuba rocket weapons which you called offensive and gives a possibility to ascertain this. The United States of America promptly removes the quarantine and gives assurances that there will be no invasion of Cuba, not only by the US but also by other countries of the Western Hemisphere. This is the essence of our agreement.

Later on you raised the question of removal of IL-28 planes from Cuba. I think you could not feel the precariousness of that request. Now, of course, there may appear those who would wish to rummage in the wordings and to interpret them in different ways. But you and we do know well what kind of weapons they were that set the forest on fire, they were missiles. It was not accidental, indeed, that in our and your message of October 27 and 28 there was not a single mention of bomber planes and specifically of IL-28's. At the same time those messages have direct reference to rocket weapons.

By the way, you yourself refer not to direct obligations of the sides but to the understanding implied by the American side in the expression "offensive weapons" mentioned in the messages and in this connection you recall your TV address of October 22<sup>3</sup> and your proclamation of October 23. But you will agree, Mr. President, that messages that fix the subject of agreement and unilateral statements of the US Government are two different things indeed.

I informed you that the IL-28 planes are twelve years old and by their combat characteristics they at present cannot be classified as offensive types of weapons. In spite of all this, we regarded [y]our request with understanding. We took into consideration that you made certain statements and therefore the question of removal of IL-28 planes assumed for you as President a certain significance and probably created certain difficulties. We grant it. Since you might really have your difficulties in this question we moved in your direction having informed you of our consent to remove these planes from Cuba. What is the situation now if to summarize it in short and to speak of the main?

We have dismantled and removed from Cuba all the medium range ballistic missiles to the last with nuclear warheads for them. All the nuclear weapons have been taken away from Cuba. The Soviet personnel who were servicing the rocket installations have also been withdrawn. We have stated it to your representatives at the negotiations in New York too.

The US Government was afforded the possibility to ascertain the fact that all 42 missiles that were in Cuba have really been removed.

Moreover, we expressed our readiness to remove also the IL-28 planes from Cuba. I inform you that we intend to remove them within a month term and

<sup>3</sup>See Chapter 4, Document 14.

may be even sooner since the term for the removal of these planes is not a matter of principle for us. We are prepared to remove simultaneously with the IL-28 planes all the Soviet personnel connected with the servicing of these planes.

What can be said in connection with the commitments of the American side? Proper consideration through the UN of the commitment not to invade Cuba—and it is the main commitment of your side—so far is being delayed. The quarantine has not been lifted as yet. Permit me to express the hope that with receipt of this communication of mine you will issue instructions to the effect that the quarantine be lifted immediately with the withdrawal of your naval and other military units from the Caribbean area. . . .

## 19. Summary Record of ExComm Meeting

*ExComm officials learn of Khrushchev's decision to remove the IL-28s. And JFK decides that the American no-invasion pledge regarding Cuba should be made only informally.*

Washington, November 20, 1962, 3:30 p.m.

Khrushchev's reply<sup>1</sup> was read to the group, the President not having yet arrived.

A statement to be made by the President at his 6:00 PM press conference was discussed and approved.<sup>2</sup> The following decisions were reached:

- a. The quarantine is to be lifted immediately and a proclamation revoking it is to be prepared.
- b. U.S. naval forces in the Caribbean will remain there for the time being and carry out normal exercises. Ships in the area will not be removed because it is normal for some to be always on station in the Caribbean. Latin American ships which are in the quarantine force will be asked to stay and participate in exercises.
- c. Secretary McNamara recommended, and the President agreed, that there would be no low-level reconnaissance missions flown tomorrow.
- d. High-level flights averaging not more than one a day will continue intermittently because of the importance of knowing that the IL-28 bombers are actually being removed.

Two other actions are to be taken without public notice:

- a. The SAC air alert will be terminated and all other military forces will be put on a reduced alert basis.
- b. TAC planes concentrated along the coast will be deployed inland.

<sup>1</sup>See Document 18.

<sup>2</sup>See Document 20.

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Secretary McNamara recommended that within forty-eight hours we announce that the air reserves called up for the Cuban [missile] crisis would be released before Christmas. . . .

The President [who arrived at 4 p.m.] asked where the question of our no-invasion assurance stands. In the light of what Khrushchev has agreed to do, if he does not get our assurances he will have very little. We should keep the assurances informal and not follow up with a formal document in the UN.

Alexis Johnson returned to the meeting to report that ABC reporter John Scali had been given the substance of Khrushchev's reply by a Russian source.<sup>3</sup> There followed a discussion of whether we should insist on shipside inspection of the IL-28 bomber removal. No clear decision was reached, some of the group believing we should insist on the shipside inspection and others saying this was not necessary.

There was further discussion of the no-invasion assurances. The Attorney General expressed his opposition to giving the assurance informally. We would be giving away a bargaining counter because Khrushchev is not insisting on having formal assurances. The President restated his view that Khrushchev would be in a difficult position if he gave us something and got nothing in return. We do not want to convey to him that we are going back on what he considers our bargain.

An instruction to McCloy and Stevenson<sup>4</sup> is to be drafted which says that we will make no formal no-invasion assurance and explained why we declined to do so.<sup>5</sup>

## 20. President Kennedy's News Conference

*Khrushchev's message of November 20 enables the president to announce to the press that the quarantine around Cuba will be lifted as the IL-28 issue has been resolved. On the question of whether the American commitment not to invade Cuba is absolute, JFK is equivocal.*

November 20, 1962.

[This press conference took place in the State Department Auditorium at 6 p.m.]

THE PRESIDENT.

. . . I have today been informed by Chairman Khrushchev that all of the IL-28 bombers now in Cuba will be withdrawn in 30 days. He also agrees that

<sup>3</sup>KGB officer Feklisov had met with Scali at Aldo's Restaurant in the early afternoon of November 20.

<sup>4</sup>These instructions were issued the following day.

<sup>5</sup>McGeorge Bundy produced this memorandum.

these planes can be observed and counted as they leave. Inasmuch as this goes a long way towards reducing the danger which faced this hemisphere 4 weeks ago, I have this afternoon instructed the Secretary of Defense to lift our naval quarantine.

In view of this action, I want to take this opportunity to bring the American people up to date on the Cuban crisis and to review the progress made thus far in fulfilling the understandings between Soviet Chairman Khrushchev and myself as set forth in our letters of October 27 and 28. Chairman Khrushchev, it will be recalled, agreed to remove from Cuba all weapons systems capable of offensive use, to halt the further introduction of such weapons into Cuba, and to permit appropriate United Nations observation and supervision to insure the carrying out and continuation of these commitments. We on our part agreed that once these adequate arrangements for verification had been established we would remove our naval quarantine and give assurances against an invasion of Cuba.

The evidence to date indicates that all known offensive missile sites in Cuba have been dismantled. The missiles and their associated equipment have been loaded on Soviet ships. And our inspection at sea of these departing ships has confirmed that the number of missiles reported by the Soviet Union as having been brought into Cuba, which closely corresponded to our own information, has now been removed. In addition, the Soviet Government has stated that all nuclear weapons have been withdrawn from Cuba and no offensive weapons will be reintroduced.

Nevertheless, important parts of the understanding of October 27th and 28th remain to be carried out. The Cuban Government has not yet permitted the United Nations to verify whether all offensive weapons have been removed, and no lasting safeguards have yet been established against the future introduction of offensive weapons back into Cuba.

Consequently, if the Western Hemisphere is to continue to be protected against offensive weapons, this Government has no choice but to pursue its own means of checking on military activities in Cuba. The importance of our continued vigilance is underlined by our identification in recent days of a number of Soviet ground combat units in Cuba, although we are informed that these and other Soviet units were associated with the protection of offensive weapons systems, and will also be withdrawn in due course.

I repeat, we would like nothing better than adequate international arrangements for the task of inspection and verification in Cuba, and we are prepared to continue our efforts to achieve such arrangements. Until that is done, difficult problems remain. As for our part, if all offensive weapons systems are removed from Cuba and kept out of the hemisphere in the future, under adequate verification and safeguards, and if Cuba is not used for the export of aggressive Communist purposes, there will be peace in the Caribbean. And as I said in September, "we shall neither initiate nor permit aggression in this hemisphere."<sup>1</sup>

We will not, of course, abandon the political, economic, and other efforts of

<sup>1</sup>From his statement at the press conference on September 13. See Chapter 3, Document 12.

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this hemisphere to halt subversion from Cuba nor our purpose and hope that the Cuban people shall some day be truly free. But these policies are very different from any intent to launch a military invasion of the island.

In short, the record of recent weeks shows real progress and we are hopeful that further progress can be made. The completion of the commitment on both sides and the achievement of a peaceful solution to the Cuban crisis might well open the door to the solution of other outstanding problems.

May I add this final thought in this week of Thanksgiving: there is much for which we can be grateful as we look back to where we stood only 4 weeks ago—the unity of this hemisphere, the support of our allies, and the calm determination of the American people. These qualities may be tested many more times in this decade, but we have increased reason to be confident that those qualities will continue to serve the cause of freedom with distinction in the years to come. . . .

Q. Mr. President, with respect to your no-invasion pledge, there has been considerable discussion and speculation in the press as to the exact scope of this pledge. I believe that Chairman Khrushchev, in his letter of the 28th, made the assumption, or the implication, or the statement, that no attack would be made on Castro, not only by the United States, but any other country in the Western Hemisphere. It appeared to be an implication that possibly you would be willing to guarantee Castro against any and all enemies anywhere. Now I realize that in your letter there was nothing of that sort and you've touched on this today, but I'm wondering if you can be a bit more specific on the scope of your no-invasion pledge.

THE PRESIDENT. I think that today's statement describes very clearly what the policy is of the Government in regard to no-invasion. I think if you re-read the statement you will see the position of the Government on that matter.

Q. Mr. President, in speaking of "adequate verification," does this mean that we insist upon onsite inspection? Would we be satisfied with anything less than actual, on-the-spot inspection in Cuba?

THE PRESIDENT. Well, we have thought that to provide adequate inspection, it should be onsite. As you know, Mr. Castro has not agreed to that, so we have had to use our own resources to implement the decision of the Organization of American States that the hemisphere should continue to keep itself informed about the development of weapons systems in Cuba. . . .

Q. Mr. President, another question on Cuba. Is it your position, sir, that you will issue a formal no-invasion pledge only after satisfactory arrangements have been made for verification and after adequate arrangements have been made to make sure that such weapons are not reintroduced once more?

THE PRESIDENT. Quite obviously, as I said in my statements, serious problems remain as to verification and reassurance, and, therefore, this matter of our negotiations really are not—have not been completed and until they're completed, of course, I suppose we're not going to be fully satisfied that there will be peace in the Caribbean.

In regard to my feelings about what remains to be done, and on the matter of invasion, I think my statement is the best expression of our views.

Q. Mr. President, what would we accept as a guarantee, as a safeguard against

reintroduction? Can that be achieved by anything short of continuous aerial reconnaissance?

THE PRESIDENT. Well, I think that what we would like to have is the kind of inspection on the ground which would make any other means of obtaining information unnecessary.

Q. A continuing inspection after the settlement—

THE PRESIDENT. Inspection which would provide us with assurances that there are not on the island weapons capable of offensive action against the United States or neighboring countries and that they will not be reintroduced. Obviously, that is our goal. If we do not achieve that goal, then we have to use other resources to assure ourselves that weapons are not there, or that they're not being reintroduced. . . .

Q. Sir, would you please clear up for us our relationship with the United Nations? If we wanted to invade Cuba, if we wanted to take unilateral action in any way, could we do so without the approval of the United Nations?

THE PRESIDENT. Well, I don't think a question—you have to really give me a much more detailed hypothetical question before I could consider answering it, and even under those conditions it might not be wise. Obviously, the United States—let's use a hypothetical case, which is always better—the United States has the means as a sovereign power to defend itself. And of course exercises that power, has in the past, and would in the future. We would hope to exercise it in a way consistent with our treaty obligations, including the United Nations Charter. But we, of course, keep to ourselves and hold to ourselves under the United States Constitution and under the laws of international law, the right to defend our security. On our own, if necessary—though we, as I say, hope to always move in concert with our allies, but on our own if that situation was necessary to protect our survival or integrity or other vital interests. . . .

## 21. Summary of ExComm Meeting

*JFK tells his advisers he does not wish to give Khrushchev (and Castro) an ironclad guarantee against a U.S. invasion of Cuba.*

Washington, November 21, 1962.

. . . Three draft instructions,<sup>1</sup> one written by McCloy, another by Stevenson, and a third by the State Department, were discussed. The State draft was largely a restatement of the President's press conference statement.<sup>2</sup> It made the point that we cannot ignore the necessity of ensuring the peace and security of the

<sup>1</sup>These draft instructions were for a U.S. declaration to be made at the UN on the question of an American no-invasion pledge regarding Cuba.

<sup>2</sup>On November 20. See Document 20.

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hemisphere. We must satisfy ourselves that no offensive weapons remain in Cuba. The burden is on Cuba, not the USSR, to ensure that we can do this. The State [Department] draft was described as an offering document.

Mr. Ball said that McCloy's view is that we got from the Russians more than we expected. Therefore, we should not put so much stress on ground inspection<sup>3</sup> now that if we don't get it it is a defeat for us.

The President agreed that we could abandon insistence on ground inspection, but he felt that the proposed no-invasion assurances were too hard. He said our objective is to preserve our right to invade Cuba in the event of civil war, if there were guerrilla activities in other Latin American countries or if offensive weapons were reintroduced into Cuba. We do not want to build up Castro by means of a no-invasion guarantee. The pertinent sentence in the declaration which we would make to the UN Security Council was revised.<sup>4</sup>

The President left the meeting after approving an interim reply<sup>5</sup> to the most recent message from Khrushchev.<sup>6</sup> . . .

## 22. Message from President Kennedy to Chairman Khrushchev

*Kennedy confirms for Khrushchev what he had stated at his press conference the previous day—that the blockade will end as the IL-28s are being withdrawn. He also touches on the issue of a U.S. no-invasion pledge.*

Washington, November 21, 1962.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I have been glad to get your letter of November 20,<sup>1</sup> which arrived in good time yesterday. As you will have seen, I was able to announce the lifting of our quarantine promptly at my press conference, on the basis of your welcome assurance that the IL-28 bombers will be removed within a month.

I am now instructing our negotiators in New York<sup>2</sup> to move ahead promptly with proposals for a solution of the remaining elements in the Cuban problem. I do not wish to confuse the discussion by trying to state our present position in detail in this message, but I do want you to know that I continue to believe that

<sup>3</sup>The idea behind ground inspection was that it would prove that all the missiles had been withdrawn from Cuba.

<sup>4</sup>For this draft declaration as sent to U.S. officials at the UN, see Document 205 in Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963*, XI (Washington, D.C., 1996), 517-519.

<sup>5</sup>See Document 22.

<sup>6</sup>See Document 18. Bromley Smith produced this memorandum.

<sup>1</sup>See Document 18.

<sup>2</sup>Namely, Stevenson and McCloy.

it is important to settle this matter promptly and on reasonable terms, so that we may move on to other issues. I regret that you have been unable to persuade Mr. Castro to accept a suitable form of inspection or verification in Cuba, and that in consequence we must continue to rely upon our own means of information. But, as I said yesterday,<sup>3</sup> there need be no fear of any invasion of Cuba while matters take their present favorable course.

### 23. Memorandum of Conversation Between First Deputy Chairman of the Soviet Council of Ministers Anastas I. Mikoyan and Attorney General Kennedy

*One positive consequence of the missile crisis was a heightened desire on the part of the superpowers to make the cold war safer. The 1963 Nuclear Test Ban Treaty would be one sign of this enlarged Soviet-American commitment to conciliation. A meeting between Bobby Kennedy and one of Khrushchev's closest aides conveys a sense of this mutual superpower interest in improved relations.*

November 30, 1962.

[...] On the evening of 30 November, A. I. Mikoyan was present at a dinner in honor of the American Secretary of the Interior [Stewart] Udall. The guests included R. Kennedy, Under Secretary of State [George] Ball, the chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisors [Walter] Heller, the chairman of the Board of Directors of the "New York Times" [Orville] Dryfoos, and the Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin.

All the American guests were with their wives, except for Robert Kennedy who came with his eldest daughter, age 13. He has seven children in all. He said that his wife, together with the other six [children], who had the flu, had gone to Florida to bring them up to [good] condition.

Before dinner, Robert Kennedy, after conversations of a protocol-like nature in the presence of all, asked A. I. Mikoyan to step into another room. . . .

Then he [Robert Kennedy] touched on the major questions for which they had left the company—the significance of yesterday's conversations with President Kennedy<sup>1</sup> and the need for contacts between Khrushchev and Kennedy and mutual actions.

The President, said R. Kennedy, considers yesterday's conversation extremely useful, promoting further mutual comprehension between our governments and

<sup>3</sup>At his November 20 press conference. See Document 20.

<sup>1</sup>On November 29 JFK and Mikoyan had met for more than three hours.

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their heads. In this respect, this meeting can be characterized as definite progress. Such is the opinion of the president himself.

What is most important now?, continued R. Kennedy. The most important, even more important than the fates of my children and your grandchildren, although they, of course, are the nearest and dearest to us, is the question of mutual understanding between Chairman Khrushchev and President Kennedy. Indeed, it now decides the fate of the world. One must admit that in the course of the recent crisis, their personal relations and mutual trust underwent serious trials, as a result of which, frankly speaking, damage was sustained. Therefore, it is very important to do everything to restore fully the trust on which so much depends. We ourselves understand the need for this, for we must look ahead. We, concluded R. Kennedy, sincerely hope that the development of our relations can follow a happier course than in the past.

A. I. Mikoyan replied to R. Kennedy that he fully agrees with the idea of the importance for preserving peace and for the basic improvement of relations between our countries of good personal relations between N. S. Khrushchev and President Kennedy, their mutual understanding and trust of one another. As one of N. S. Khrushchev's comrades-in-arms, said A. I. Mikoyan, I can assure you that exactly these thoughts define his approach to his relations with the USA president. N. S. Khrushchev values the personal quality of these relations. The Soviet government renders its due to the self-possession exhibited by the president in the most dangerous moment, when the world stood at the edge of thermonuclear war, but by mutual concessions and compromises, succeeded in averting this war.

Moscow, continued A. I. Mikoyan, noticed the positive role you, the president's brother, played during the confidential negotiations between the president and the head of the Soviet state. Of course, we understand, that you did this, as did we, in the interests of one's own country, one's own people. It was important, however, that you understood correctly, in the critical moment, what those interests were. Let us now complete the outlined resolution to the Cuban question, without complicating it with trivial formal cavils or even worse, some deviation from the agreement on the final settlement of this question. Indeed, if one speaks the truth, there's not much left to do; it is only necessary to put in writing or to finalize, without excessive procrastination that which the American side obligated itself to do during the exchange of messages between N. S. Khrushchev and the president.<sup>2</sup>

R. Kennedy noted that he agreed that little of essence remained to be done—indeed, “it's 90 percent done,” although there are still difficulties that must be overcome. But he, R. Kennedy, did not intend to analyze these difficulties. They were the subject of detailed discussion in New York.<sup>3</sup> He only wanted to emphasize briefly that with which he began: the importance of further developing mutual understanding between the president and N. S. Khrushchev. This will

<sup>2</sup>Namely, the American no-invasion pledge contained in Kennedy's October 27 message to Khrushchev.

<sup>3</sup>McCloy, Stevenson, and Kuznetsov participated in this discussion.

determine to a large extent the success and solution of other questions that still await settlement.

A. I. Mikoyan agreed with this. . . .

In concluding the conversation, R. Kennedy asked [Mikoyan] to give greetings to N. S. Khrushchev. In his turn A. I. Mikoyan sent greetings to the president.

Robert Kennedy showed interest in visiting the Soviet Union and expressed this desire.

A. I. Mikoyan said that this was a good idea and completely realizable. If the decrease in tension between [our] countries continues further and the political atmosphere warms up, then this trip would not only be interesting but useful for him. . . .<sup>4</sup>

## 24. Message from Chairman Khrushchev to President Kennedy

*Beginning on December 3, the Soviet IL-28 bombers were removed from Cuba. With this matter out of the way, the salient issue left over from the missile crisis, especially from Moscow's point of view, was the need to register in documents with the United Nations the Russian and American pledges made in the settlement. In correspondence with JFK, Khrushchev makes clear that he is particularly eager to see Kennedy's promise not to invade Cuba highlighted in this way. He also discusses the use of confidential channels of communication between the Soviet and American governments.*

Moscow, December 11, 1962.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT, It would seem that you and we have come now to a final stage in the elimination of tension around Cuba. Our relations are already entering now their formal course since all those means<sup>1</sup> placed by us on the Cuban territory which you considered offensive are withdrawn and you ascertained that to which effect a statement was already made by your side.<sup>2</sup>

That is good. We appreciate that you just as we approached not dogmatically the solution of the question of eliminating the tension which evolved and this enabled us under existing conditions to find also a more flexible form of verification of the withdrawal of the above mentioned means.<sup>3</sup> Understanding and

<sup>4</sup>Ambassador Dobrynin and Third Secretary at the Soviet Embassy Igor D. Bubnov transcribed this conversation between Bobby Kennedy and Mikoyan.

<sup>1</sup>Weapons, in other words.

<sup>2</sup>Presumably a reference to JFK's November 20 press conference. See Document 20.

<sup>3</sup>In other words, there had not been UN verification, as originally intended, but U.S. intelligence had been allowed by the Russians to count the offensive weapons on Soviet ships heading back to the Soviet Union.

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flexibility displayed by you in this matter are highly appreciated by us though our criticism of American imperialism remains in force because that conflict was indeed created by the policy of the United States with regard to Cuba.

More resolute steps should be taken now to move towards finalizing the elimination of this tension, i.e. you on your part should clearly confirm at the U.N. as you did at your [November 20] press conference and in your messages to me the pledge of non-invasion of Cuba by the United States and your allies. . . .

I believe that you already had an opportunity to familiarize yourself with the text proposed by us<sup>4</sup> of a brief declaration of the Soviet Government in which the Soviet Union's main commitments resulting from the exchange of messages between us are formulated. We proceed from the assumption that an analogous brief declaration should be made by the U.S. Government and that the main U.S. commitments resulting from the exchange of messages<sup>5</sup> will also be fixed in it. Have a look, Mr. President, at this proposal submitted by us through your representatives in New York.

But notwithstanding what the agreement on the concrete texts of our declarations at this concluding stage will be, anyway the basic goal has been achieved and tension removed. I will tell you frankly that we have removed our means from Cuba relying on your assurance that the United States and its allies will not invade Cuba. . . .

Within a short period of time we and you have lived through a rather acute crisis. The acuteness of it was that we and you were already prepared to fight and this would lead to a thermonuclear war. Yes, to a thermonuclear world war with all its dreadful consequences. We took it into account and, being convinced that mankind would never forgive the statesmen who would not exhaust all possibilities to prevent catastrophe, agreed to a compromise although we understood—and we state it now—that your claims had no grounds whatsoever, had no legal basis and represented a manifestation of sheer arbitrariness in international affairs. We agreed to a compromise because our main purpose was to extend a helping hand to the Cuban people in order to exclude the possibility of invasion of Cuba so that Cuba could exist and develop as a free sovereign state. This is our main purpose today, it remains to be our main purpose for tomorrow and we did not and do not pursue any other purposes.

Therefore, Mr. President, everything—the stability in this area and not only in this area but in the entire world—depends on how you will now fulfill the commitments taken by you. Furthermore, it will be now a sort of litmus paper, an indicator whether it is possible to trust if similar difficulties arise in other geographical areas. I think you will agree that if our arrangement for settling the Cuban crisis fails it will undermine a possibility for manoeuvre which you and we would resort to for elimination of danger, a possibility for compromise in the future if similar difficulties arise in other areas of the world, and they really can

<sup>4</sup>In this draft declaration, presented by the Russians on December 6 during the ongoing negotiations in New York, the Soviet government stated that offensive weapons had been withdrawn from Cuba and would not be deployed again on the island; and called for the continuation of negotiations aimed at stabilizing the situation in the Caribbean.

<sup>5</sup>A reference to those sent between Kennedy and Khrushchev on October 27 and 28.

arise. We attach great significance to all this, and subsequent development will depend on you as President and on the U.S. Government.

We believe that the guarantees for non-invasion of Cuba given by you will be maintained and not only in the period of your stay in the White House, that, to use an expression, goes without saying. We believe that you will be able to receive a mandate at the next election too, that is that you will be the U.S. President for six years, which would appeal to us. At our times, six years in world politics is a long period of time and during that period we could create good conditions for peaceful coexistence on earth and this would be highly appreciated by the peoples of our countries as well as by all other peoples.

Therefore, Mr. President, I would like to express a wish that you follow the right way, as we do, in appraising the situation. Now it is of special importance to provide for the possibility of an exchange of opinion through confidential channels which you and I have set up and which we use.<sup>6</sup> But the confidential nature of our personal relations will depend on whether you fulfill—as we did—the commitments taken by you and give instructions to your representatives in New York to formalize these commitments in appropriate documents. This is needed in order that all the peoples be sure that tension in the Caribbean is a matter of yesterday and that now normal conditions have been really created in the world. And for this it is necessary to fix the assumed commitments in the documents of both sides and register them with the United Nations. . . .

I would like to express to you my disapproval of certain things. We read now various articles by your columnists and correspondents and we are concerned that in those articles they are widely commenting on the confidential exchange of opinion and it is being done by the people who as it would seem have no relation to confidential channels set up between us. Judging by the contents of these articles it is clear that their authors are well informed and we get an impression that this is not a result of an accidental leak of the confidential information but a result of benevolence for those people into whose hands gets the information they make public. This evidently is done for the purpose of informing the public in a one-sided way.

Frankly speaking, if we use the confidential communications this way, it will be far from facilitating confidence in those channels. You yourself realize that if your side begins to act in the way that our exchange of opinion by way of confidential channels will leak through fingers these channels will cease to be of use and may even cause harm. But this is up to you. If you consider that those channels have outlived themselves and are of no use any longer, then we also will draw appropriate conclusions in this respect. I tell you this straightforwardly and I would like to know your opinion on this matter. I have been denouncing American imperialism. But on the other hand I consider it useful for us to continue to maintain the possibility of confidential exchange of opinion because a minimum of personal trust is necessary for leading statesmen of both countries and this corresponds to the interests of our countries and peoples, to the interests of peace all over the world.

<sup>6</sup>A reference presumably to the Bolshakov and perhaps also the Dobrynin secret channel to Robert Kennedy. See also Document 25, footnote 6.

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Let us, Mr. President, eliminate promptly the consequences of the Cuban crisis and get down to solving other questions, and we have them in number.<sup>7</sup> . . .

Please, excuse me for my straightforwardness and frankness but I believe as before that a frank and straightforward exchange of opinion is needed to avoid the worst.

Please, convey to your wife and your whole family wishes of good health from myself, my wife and my entire family.

## 25. Message from President Kennedy to Chairman Khrushchev

*JFK replies to Khrushchev, saying that a U.S. no-invasion pledge regarding Cuba can be registered with the UN only if proper verification of the removal of all the missiles from Cuba takes place (a condition that could not be met, as Castro would not allow inspectors on Cuban soil), if Cuba committed no acts of aggression in the Western Hemisphere, and if no nuclear weapons were redeployed on the island.*

Washington, December 14, 1962.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I was glad to have your message of December 11<sup>1</sup> and to know that you believe, as we do, that we have come to the final stage of the Cuban affair between us, the settlement of which will have significance for our future relations and for our ability to overcome other difficulties. I wish to thank you for your expression of appreciation of the understanding and flexibility we have tried to display.

I have followed with close attention the negotiations on the final settlement of the Cuban question between your representative, Mr. Kuznetsov, and our representatives, Ambassador Stevenson and Mr. McCloy, in New York. In these negotiations we have tried to understand your position and I am glad to note that Mr. Kuznetsov has also shown effort to understand our problems. It is clearly in the interest of both sides that we reach agreement on how finally to dispose of the Cuban crisis. To this end, Ambassador Stevenson and Mr. McCloy presented on Wednesday a new draft of a joint statement which by now has certainly reached you.<sup>2</sup> I wish to assure you that it is our purpose to end this affair as simply and clearly as possible.

You refer to the importance of my statements on an invasion of Cuba and of

<sup>7</sup>There follows at this point in the text a section on the test-ban issue and the German question.

<sup>1</sup>See Document 24.

<sup>2</sup>For this statement draft, see Document 243 in Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963*, XI, 611-613.

our intention to fulfill them, so that no doubts are sown from the very start. I have already stated my position publicly in my press conference on November 20th,<sup>3</sup> and I am glad that this statement appears to have your understanding; we have never wanted to be driven by the acts of others into war in Cuba. The other side of the coin, however, is that we do need to have adequate assurances that all offensive weapons are removed from Cuba and are not reintroduced, and that Cuba itself commits no aggressive acts against any of the nations of the Western Hemisphere. As I understand you, you feel confident that Cuba will not in fact engage in such aggressive acts, and of course I already have your own assurance about the offensive weapons. So I myself should suppose that you could accept our position—but it is probably better to leave final discussion of these matters to our representatives in New York. I quite agree with you that the larger part of the crisis has now been ended and we should not permit others to stand in the way of promptly settling the rest without further acrimony.

With regard to your reference to the confidential channels set up between us, I can assure you that I value them. I have not concealed from you that it was a serious disappointment to me that dangerously misleading information should have come through these channels before the recent crisis.<sup>4</sup> You may also wish to know that by an accident or misunderstanding one of your diplomats appears to have used a representative of a private television network as a channel to us.<sup>5</sup> This is always unwise in our country, where the members of the press often insist on printing at some later time what they may learn privately.

Because our systems are so different, you may not be fully familiar with the practices of the American press. The competition for news in this country is fierce. A number of the competitors are not great admirers of my Administration, and perhaps an even larger number are not wholly friendly to yours. Here in Washington we have 1200 reporters accredited to the White House alone, and thousands more in other assignments. Not one of them is accountable to this government for what he reports. It would be a great mistake to think that what appears in newspapers and magazines necessarily has anything to do with the policy and purpose of this government. I am glad to say that I have some friends among newspapermen, but no spokesmen.

But let me emphasize again that we do indeed value these confidential channels. I entirely share your view that some trust is necessary for leading statesmen of our two countries; I believe that it is important to build the area of trust wherever possible. I shall of course continue to hold and to express my convictions about the relative merits of our systems of government, and I will not be surprised if you do the same.

In particular, we have been very glad to have opportunities for private exchanges with and through Mr. Bolshakov, and I am sorry to learn that he is re-

<sup>3</sup>See Document 20.

<sup>4</sup>Presumably a reference to Bolshakov's dealings with Robert Kennedy, and also to Dobrynin's statements in meetings with various American officials in early September that no offensive weapons were being sent to Cuba.

<sup>5</sup>JFK was referring to the secret dialogue between KGB agent Feklisov and American correspondent Scali, and specifically the leak to Scali, apparently by the Russians, of Khrushchev's November 20 message to JFK.

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turning to Moscow.<sup>6</sup> It is our impression that he has made a real effort to improve communications and understanding between our two governments, and we shall miss him very much.

I appreciate your writing me so frankly, and in return I have tried to be as straightforward, for I agree with you that only through such frank exchanges can we better understand our respective points of view. Partly for this reason I refrained in my last press conference from commenting on certain aspects of your speech before the Supreme Soviet<sup>7</sup> with which you realize, of course, we could not agree.

We also are hopeful that once the Cuban crisis is behind us, we shall be able to tackle the other problems confronting us and to find the path to their solution.<sup>8</sup> . . .

Thank you for your expressions of good wishes to me and my family, and let me in turn send you and your wife and family our personal good wishes for the coming year.

## 26. Television and Radio Interview of President Kennedy

*With 1962 drawing to a close, JFK reflects in an interview with the press on the dangers of the missile crisis. He gives the impression of a man deeply affected by the experience.*

December 17, 1962.<sup>1</sup>

. . . THE PRESIDENT. I think, looking back on Cuba,<sup>2</sup> what is of concern is the fact that both governments were so far out of contact, really. I don't think that we expected that he [Khrushchev] would put the missiles in Cuba, because it would have seemed such an imprudent action for him to take, as it was later proved. Now, he obviously must have thought that he could do it in secret and that the United States would accept it. So that he did not judge our intentions accurately.

Well, now, if you look at the history of this century, where World War I really came through a series of misjudgments of the intentions of others, certainly

<sup>6</sup>Moscow had recalled Bolshakov, who had transmitted many messages between Khrushchev and John Kennedy via Robert Kennedy, after the American press reported that he had played a role in deceiving the Kennedy administration about the missiles in Cuba before the onset of the crisis.

<sup>7</sup>On December 12.

<sup>8</sup>There follows at this point in the text two paragraphs on the German question and the test ban.

<sup>1</sup>This interview was recorded on December 16 at the White House and broadcast on television on December 17.

<sup>2</sup>JFK meant the missile crisis, specifically.

World War II, where Hitler thought that he could seize Poland, that the British might not fight, and if they fought, after the defeat of Poland they might not continue to fight, Korea, where obviously the North Koreans did not think we were going to come in, and Korea, when we did not think the Chinese were going to come in, when you look at all those misjudgments which brought on war, and then you see the Soviet Union and the United States so far separated in their beliefs, we believing in a world of independent sovereign and different diverse nations, they believing in a monolithic Communist world, and you put the nuclear equation into that struggle, that is what makes this, as I said before, such a dangerous time, and that we must proceed with firmness and also with the best information we can get, and also with care. There is nothing—one mistake can make this whole thing blow up. So that—one major mistake either by Mr. Khrushchev or by us here—so that is why it is much easier to make speeches about some of the things which we ought to be doing, but I think that anybody who looks at the fatality lists on atomic weapons, and realizes that the Communists have a completely twisted view of the United States, and that we don't comprehend them, that is what makes life in the sixties hazardous. . . .

## 27. Letter from UN Ambassador Stevenson and Soviet First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Kuznetsov to UN Secretary General U Thant

*Adlai Stevenson and Vasily Kuznetsov, both of whom had been centrally involved in December in the effort to achieve closure on the missile crisis by producing a joint declaration on superpower commitments on Cuba, inform the UN secretary general in effect that they have been unable to accomplish this. Accordingly they ask U Thant to remove the Cuban issue from the Security Council agenda. The process of trying to tie up the loose ends of the missile crisis was finally at an end.*

January 7, 1963.

On behalf of the Governments of the United States of America and the Soviet Union, we desire to express to you our appreciation for your efforts in assisting our Governments to avert the serious threat to the peace which recently arose in the Caribbean area.

While it has not been possible for our Governments to resolve all the problems that have arisen in connexion with this affair, they believe that, in view of the degree of understanding reached between them on the settlement of the crisis and the extent of progress in the implementation of this understanding, it is

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not necessary for this item to occupy further the attention of the Security Council at this time.

The Governments of the United States of America and of the Soviet Union express the hope that the actions taken to avert the threat of war in connexion with this crisis will lead toward the adjustment of other differences between them and the general easing of tensions that could cause a further threat of war.

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## PART 6

# 1963: Old Tactics, New Approaches

JOHN KENNEDY, it can be argued, changed as president during the final year of his life. The Cuban missile crisis appears to have sobered him, increasing his determination to make the cold war safer. Examples of this new resolve came in the summer of 1963 with his famous speech at American University, noteworthy for its conciliatory attitude toward the Soviet Union, and his signing of the Test Ban Treaty, which limited nuclear testing. A more progressive phase in his civil rights policies in 1963, with the introduction in Congress of a sweeping bill designed to end segregation, can be viewed as the domestic counterpart to this more accommodating thrust in his foreign policy.

The documents in this chapter can be examined to determine whether JFK's Cuban policies support the notion that he became an increasingly mature leader. Not all of them do, by any means. In 1963 Cuba was no longer the central focus of Kennedy's foreign policy. Vietnam came to assume a priority for U.S. policymakers that it retained over the course of the next decade. But when JFK and his advisers did turn their attention to Castro, their attitude was strikingly and troublingly reminiscent of their pre-missile crisis outlook: they remained determined to use covert means to undermine Castro's position. In June 1963 JFK gave the go-ahead for a CIA plan to carry out sabotage and other hostile activities against Cuba. It was a sort of condensed version of Operation Mongoose. Some of the documents in this chapter demonstrate that Russian officials soon learned of the resumption of covert U.S. pressure on Cuba, making this issue a bone of contention between the superpowers in the fall of 1963.

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In contrast to this continuing effort to harass Castro, however, the Kennedy administration pursued another clandestine strategy in the fall of 1963, this one aimed at generating a dialogue with the Cuban leader. William Attwood, a U.S. official at the United Nations, was centrally involved in this enterprise, and he kept senior administration officials abreast of his efforts. Had Kennedy not been assassinated, this initiative may conceivably have brought about an accommodation with Castro.

Robert Kennedy, such a conspicuous figure on Cuban matters in 1961-1962, was less prominent in 1963 in shaping administration policy toward Castro. But his role remained significant.

# 1. Memorandum of a White House Conversation Between President Kennedy and First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Kuznetsov

*In a conversation with a senior Soviet official, JFK calls for the removal of Russian troops still in Cuba, and is asked to make good on his promise not to invade the island.*

Washington, January 9, 1963, 5 p.m.

Kuznetsov thanked the President for receiving him, saying that he considered this an honor, particularly in view of how busy the President is. . . .

The President said that he thought Kuznetsov knew from his talks with McCloy and Stevenson of the particular sensitivity in the United States to anything involving Cuba. This is a delicate nerve in the United States stretching back to the beginning of our country. On the other hand, the President said, he was anxious to maintain good relations with the Soviet Union. He had noted before that these two most powerful countries have no national interests which bring them into collision. The President had spent a good deal of time defending this viewpoint prior to the Cuban crisis. Now that the matter had quieted down he saw no reason why the United States and the U.S.S.R. should be involved again in the same way. He asked Kuznetsov to explain to his principals American sensitivity over Cuba. The fact that there are 15 to 17,000 Soviet troops still in Cuba causes difficulties for the United States Government and for those in the United States who seek to maintain good relations with the U.S.S.R. The President said the Soviet Government could understand how the United States felt about this if they could imagine a similar situation in Finland. He was hopeful that Soviet policies toward Cuba, including the personnel and armaments there, would lead to a further relaxation of the situation. As to the question of the Bay of Pigs prisoners,<sup>1</sup> the President said he had put them on the beach and he felt responsible for

<sup>1</sup>In Miami on December 29, JFK addressed those Cubans who had participated in the Bay of Pigs invasion and had just been released by Castro. He told them that he looked forward to a change of government in Havana. Earlier in this meeting, Kuznetsov had spoken critically of Kennedy's remarks in Miami.

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them. He had not said in his address to them that the United States would invade Cuba, though he had expressed the hope for a change in the situation there. All the U.S. forces which had been mobilized during the crisis were back in their camps. If the Soviet Union can comprehend the sensitivity and difficult nature of the problems the United States faces in the Caribbean, this can lead to a solution of other problems.

In reply, Kuznetsov said that the Soviet Government will fulfill all of the obligations it undertook with the exchange of letters between Khrushchev and the President. As for the Soviet military personnel in Cuba, it seemed to him that all the agreements in the exchange of letters had been carried out. This problem had been dealt with in the course of the exchange and there was a clear understanding on both sides concerning this matter. The Soviet Government will abide by all its agreements so there is nothing new in this problem.

The President noted that Khrushchev had given a clear commitment to withdraw all military personnel connected with the missile sites in Cuba and all others "in time." He recognized that the latter was not the same kind of commitment since no time was specified. Nevertheless, he wanted to mention this matter which occupied attention in the United States.

Kuznetsov reiterated that he thought that there was no misunderstanding on this point.

Referring to the President's comparison of the Cuban situation with Finland, Kuznetsov noted that there were many U.S. military bases, armed with deadly weapons and occupied by troops, around the U.S.S.R. However, he had no instructions on this point and said that the U.S.S.R. is not raising the question at this time.

The President replied that the U.S. had not introduced a new major base in any country such as Finland. A thermonuclear base there would have created a new situation. He repeated that Cuba was a matter of great sensitivity to the American people and again asked Kuznetsov to communicate this to his Government. Good relations between our two countries, the President said, will be made easier if the Soviet Government understands this.

Kuznetsov reverted to the question of the President's reception of the Cuban brigade in Florida.<sup>2</sup> He said this had created the opinion in Moscow that this brigade will be maintained, that others will be created and that then there would be a fresh invasion of Cuba.

The President replied that this was not going to happen. In a backgrounder which he had given in Florida he had said that the United States had no intention of invading Cuba and noted that our position remained that which he had set forth in his press conference of November 20.<sup>3</sup> He said there would be no third hand invasion of Cuba. Nevertheless, it would be easier for the United States if there were a reduction of the Soviet military presence in Cuba. The President noted that Castro makes many more speeches than the President does and in them calls for revolution in Latin America. However, Castro was of no concern to the United States. The relations between the United States and the

<sup>2</sup>Another reference to JFK's December 29 address. See the preceding note.

<sup>3</sup>See Chapter 5, Document 20.

U.S.S.R. are more important and the President was anxious to lessen areas of disagreement between the two countries.

Kuznetsov replied that while the results of the New York negotiations were not as great as they might have been,<sup>4</sup> the situation was better now than it had been at the end of October. The immediate threat had been averted. However, normalization of relations required that something else should be done. No one can agree that a situation is normal when a great power threatens a small one, and officially expresses a desire to strangle and overthrow the government of the smaller one. Thus, some problems remain and further normalization of the situation depends on the United States Government. . . .

The President reiterated that the United States was not concerned with Cuba but with the Soviet military presence there. He noted a number of speeches which Castro and Che Guevara had made during the last two months calling for armed struggle in Latin America, saying that small bands of guerrillas would act as a catalyst in the process of taking power from the hands of the Yankee imperialists and insisting that this must be done in a large number of Latin American countries. He read a quotation from an interview by Che Guevara on November 23.

Kuznetsov replied that he was not at all sure the quotes which the President had made from the Cuban speeches were exact. It seemed to him that the Cubans had far more reasons to fear and worry than the United States. Ever since the beginning of the 1959 revolution, Cuba had been under various undermining pressures. The Cuban Government and Castro had made quite clear their willingness to negotiate with the United States concerning all points awaiting solution. The United States could respond to these Cuban proposals in order to normalize relations. He noted that the New York talks had been between the United States and the U.S.S.R. but that the problem had been made more difficult by the fact that they had been talking about another country.<sup>5</sup>

## 2. Notes of President Kennedy's Remarks at a National Security Council Meeting

*JFK tells his foreign policy advisers that the future use of force against Cuba cannot be ruled out.*

Washington, January 22, 1963.

I will start by reviewing areas of policy which will be before us in the com-

<sup>4</sup>Kuznetsov had been negotiating with Adlai Stevenson and John McCloy in New York since the end of the missile crisis.

<sup>5</sup>American official John C. Guthrie drafted this memorandum.

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ing months and indicate the general attitude which I have toward them and to emphasize where we might put our emphasis in the next few months. . . .

Would like to say a word first about Cuba.

The indications are that the importance of timing is of paramount importance in reaching judgments—both by the USSR and the US. Our big problem is to protect our interests and prevent a nuclear war. It was a very close thing whether we would engage in a quarantine or an air strike.<sup>1</sup> In looking back, it was really that it presented us with an immediate crisis and the USSR had to make their judgment and come to a decision to act in twelve hours. In looking back over that four or five day period, we all changed our views somewhat, or at least appreciated the advantages and disadvantages of alternate courses of action. That is what we should do in any other struggle with the Soviet Union—and I believe we will be in one in the future. We should have sufficient time to consider the alternatives. You could see that the Russians had a good deal of debate in a 48 hour period. If they had only to act in an hour or two, their actions would have been spasmodic and might have resulted in nuclear war. It is important that we have time to study their reaction. We should continue our policy even though we do not get Europe to go along with us.

The time will probably come when we will have to act again on Cuba. Cuba might be our response in some future situation—the same way the Russians have used Berlin. We may decide that Cuba might be a more satisfactory response than a nuclear response. We must be ready—although this might not come. We should be prepared to move on Cuba if it should be in our national interest. The planning by the US, by the Military, in the direction of our effort should be advanced always keeping Cuba in mind in the coming months and to be ready to move with all possible speed. We can use Cuba to limit their actions just as they have had Berlin to limit our actions.<sup>2</sup>

### 3. Memorandum from Gordon Chase of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs McGeorge Bundy

*Although Operation Mongoose was formally ended in early 1963, the idea of supporting an anti-Castro revolt was not altogether abandoned, as this administration response to news of a possible uprising in Cuba makes clear.*

<sup>1</sup>JFK was obviously discussing here the first week of the missile crisis.

<sup>2</sup>An unidentified CIA official produced this memorandum.

Washington, February 18, 1963.

## SUBJECT

Report of a Possible Revolt in Cuba on February 20th<sup>1</sup>

The discussion at [the] State [Department] this afternoon brought out the following points regarding the possibility of a revolt in Cuba on February 20th.

1. Both State and CIA doubt the reliability of the report. CIA noted, however, that if such a thing were about to happen, the report of it would come in just this way.

2. One of the tough questions—what size and type of revolt is worthwhile to support? Do you determine this by the number of people involved? The geographic area it covers? etc. The revolt should have a potential political appeal to a large cross section of Cuban people. For example, a revolt by a number of disgruntled farmers would not meet this criterion.

3. There was some discussion of a possible outline of action. First, there could be a deniable airdrop of supplies by CIA while the U.S. military arm began to wind up. This could be followed by a limited airstrike within about twenty-four hours and a full island air-strike within seventy-two hours. It would take a maximum of eighteen days to mount a full invasion force. Between the full airstrike and the invasion, things could be going on—e.g. special forces dropped in Cuba. A diversionary action should be initiated quickly so that Castro cannot concentrate his forces on the insurgents, leaving us no one to liberate.

4. The presence of Russian troops, of course, presents a very sticky problem. One of the first targets would be the SAM sites and inevitably Russians would be killed. The effect of this on Khrushchev would have to be weighed.

Perhaps we could tell Khrushchev what we are going to do and advise him to take all Russians off the SAM sites and move them to restricted areas. In this regard we could risk a flight or two over the SAM sites to test whether he has followed our advice.

If the prospects for the removal of the Russian troops in the near future look very good, we may want to dampen the revolt for now—broadcasts by Cuban exiles that Castro is setting a trap.

5. The present Department of Defense off-the-cuff estimate of fighting in Cuba is that there would be four or five days of heavy fighting and another thirty days of less severe fighting. There might or might not be prolonged guerrilla activity. If the campaign is short and sweet, there probably will be less guerrilla fighting afterwards.

6. It was noted that the invasion would violate the Havana Treaty (can respond to calls for help only by recognized governments).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>On February 18 the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research reported the possibility of minor uprisings in Cuba but cast doubt on the likelihood of a large-scale anti-Castro revolt.

<sup>2</sup>The Havana Convention on Duties and Rights of States in the Event of Civil Strife (1928).

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#### 4. Memorandum for the Record Drafted by Chairman of the JCS Taylor

*Contingency planning for an attack on Cuba, an important feature of the Kennedy administration's covert approach toward Castro before the missile crisis, continues in 1963, with JFK's active involvement.*

Washington, February 28, 1963.

##### SUBJECT

Meeting of the Joint Chiefs of Staff with the President on 28 February 1963

All the Chiefs were present at the above meeting which lasted from 5:30 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. The following subjects were the principal topics of discussion.

a. *The Cuba Invasion Plan.*

(1) The Chiefs discussed the time-space factors in the implementation of CINCLANT Operation Plan 312 and 316.<sup>1</sup> . . . The President was shown why it would take approximately 18 days from decision to D-Day from present troop and ship dispositions. In order to reduce this time to something like 7 days, considerable prepositioning would be required in order to get Army/Marine units to the East Coast and to assemble the necessary cargo shipping. The Chiefs expressed the view that it was unlikely that a period of tension would not precede a decision to invade Cuba which would allow ample time for preparatory measures; hence, it was undesirable to make permanent changes of station of Army and Marine units which would upset the present disposition of strategic reserve forces.

(2) The President expressed particular interest in the possibility of getting some troops quickly into Cuba in the event of a general uprising. He was told that only the airborne troops could arrive with little delay, that the first Marine elements would require about 7 days before landing. He asked the Chiefs to develop specific plans in anticipation of the need for this kind of quick reaction.<sup>2</sup> . . .

<sup>1</sup>These were U.S. contingency plans for an attack on Cuba, developed before the missile crisis.  
<sup>2</sup>Maxwell Taylor drafted this memorandum on March 1.

## 5. Memorandum from Gordon Chase of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs McGeorge Bundy

*A variety of covert schemes to pressure Castro (and Soviet troops in Cuba) are devised.*

Washington, April 3, 1963.

### SUBJECT

Cuba Coordinating Committee—Covert Operations in Cuba

Attached is an agenda<sup>1</sup> which was discussed at a meeting of the Cottrell Committee<sup>2</sup> on April 1. The meeting was attended by Secretary Vance, Joe Califano, Dick Helms, Dez FitzGerald, and Bob Hurwitch.

1. *Balloon Operations Over Havana*—The plan is well under way. Assuming the winds are right, CIA proposes to release balloons containing 300,000 to 500,000 leaflets on May Day<sup>3</sup> (before daylight). The balloons will not be visible by radar or by the naked eye. The leaflets will (1) attack Castro's henchmen, and (2) contain cartoons illustrating sabotage techniques.

The decision on the balloons is scheduled for another review during the week preceding May Day.

2. *Training of CIA-Sponsored Cuban Exiles on Military Reservations*—CIA and the Army are now working on this one to find appropriate installations.

3. *Russian Language Programs*—The Committee decided in favor of instituting three programs (Radio Liberty, Radio Caribe, and an intrusion program) . . .

In approving the three programs for Special Group consideration, the Committee recognized that they will probably be of marginal value only; however, they will cost us very little, financial or otherwise.

4. *Sabotage of Cuban Shipping (19 ships)*—The Committee discussed three forms of sabotage—limpets,<sup>4</sup> incendiaries in the cargoes, and abrasives in the machinery.

The Committee decided against limpets. . . . Unfortunately, there is no certain way of controlling a limpet; it could sink a ship and the sinking could be billed as a U.S. submarine attack. Secretary Vance came down hard against sinkings.

<sup>1</sup>The agenda (not included here) enumerates the six items mentioned in this memorandum.

<sup>2</sup>An interdepartmental committee, chaired by Sterling J. Cottrell, was set up in early 1963 to coordinate the administration's overt and covert Cuban policies.

<sup>3</sup>A holiday in honor of workers.

<sup>4</sup>Literally a limpet is a marine mollusk which adheres to rocks.

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The Committee will recommend to the Special Group the incendiaries which would be timed to go off in international waters and the abrasives in the machinery. While the propaganda boost might be nil, they are easier to effect than limpets and could really hurt Castro.

The Committee gave CIA the option of using either its own Cubans or of using DRE as a cut-out.

5. *Redirection of Cuban Exile Group Operations*—The Committee discussed this one briefly—i.e. what is an acceptable target? Dick Helms pointed out that although these groups may start out to get a non-Soviet target, once you let them go, you can never really be sure what they will do. Bob Hurwitch seemed to favor the approach that attacks and sabotage should appear to come from inside rather than from outside Cuba.

The Committee came to no decision on this one. More thinking is needed.

6. *Propaganda Inside Cuba to Attack Soviet Troops*—While Secretary Vance expressed some concern about the possibility that this would lead to a conflagration between the Cubans and the Soviets (what would we do), the Committee decided in favor of this course of action. While the results will probably not be startling for our side, the costs and risks are small. (I'm not sure a conflagration would be such a bad thing for us, even if it did occur. How much chance would these 5,000 combat troops have against the huge and well-equipped Cuban army? I don't think the Russians would dare try to impose their will by force; they would have to grin and bear it.)

*Comment:*

1. In considering specifics of a covert program, I think we should keep in the back of our minds the possibility that we may want to turn our policy around sometime in the future. This does not necessarily mean that we would rule out covert operations—rather, we would probably want to direct them towards splitting the Cuba/Soviet tie (e.g. a "Russki Go Home" campaign) instead of forcing Castro to embrace the Soviets more tightly (e.g. inactivation of Cuban shipping which would lead to further Cuban dependence on Bloc shipping). In this regard, we may wish to consider carefully the gains and risks involved in directing more violent efforts against selected Russian targets within Cuba. I have a feeling that the risks are not as great as they seem.

2. Assuming we continue our present policy or consider a turnaround policy very far down the road, I like an active covert program. It seems to me that a good sabotage program is one of the few tools we can use to really hurt Castro economically. Our present policy of isolating Cuba from the Free World is not going to bust Castro. Instead, I suspect that the Cuban economy is at its low right now. With no effective U.S. covert intervention, it will probably grow healthier from here on as the Cuban economy moves from the difficult transition stage between economic dependence on the West and economic dependence on the Bloc.

## 6. Memorandum from Attorney General Kennedy to President Kennedy

*Resuming their clandestine dialogue, Robert Kennedy and Ambassador Dobrynin clash bitterly over Cuba.*

Washington, April 3, 1963.

Mr. Markov of the Russian Embassy<sup>1</sup> called this morning and said that the Russian Ambassador [Dobrynin] wished to come by and see me. I arranged for him to come in at 3:30 p.m.

We exchanged some pleasantries. He told me that Norman Cousins had asked to see Khrushchev and he had arranged it.<sup>2</sup> What was Cousins' relationship to the President? Then, as is his custom, he handed me a so-called "talking paper." This document was particularly long—approximately 25 pages. It was ostensibly to me from the Ambassador but in fact it was from Khrushchev to the President.

The paper made five or six major points, among which were the following:

... Another point that was made was a sharp and bitter criticism about the raids that had taken place against Russian ships.<sup>3</sup> These were piratical acts and the United States must take responsibility for them. It isn't possible to believe that if we really wanted to stop these raids that we could not do so. They were glad to hear of the steps that are being taken lately but in the last analysis the specific acts, namely, the arrests that we made would be the criteria by which they would judge our sincerity. The Soviet Union questions whether in fact we wish to end these attacks for our criticism of them has been not that they were wrong but that they were ineffective. The clear implication was that if the raids had been effective they would have had our approval.

Further, our efforts to isolate Cuba, to build a virtual wall around it, was a barbaric act. Our actions to stifle Cuba's commerce and to create economic difficulties and isolate her from her neighbors in Latin America were completely unwarranted. The support given to counter-revolutionaries and the statements to the barbaric mercenaries in Miami by the President were also bitterly criticized.

The document also stated that the President should understand the continued pressure on the Soviet Union for the withdrawal of troops from Cuba was not going to be effective. The Soviet Union does not respond to pressure. As a matter of fact, they had already withdrawn twice as many troops as the largest number that had appeared in the newspapers here in the United States. However, he said that he was going to refuse to give the actual number that had been withdrawn because then public statements would be issued that they had been

<sup>1</sup>Petr I. Markov, attaché at the Soviet embassy.

<sup>2</sup>Cousins, editor of the *Saturday Review*, discussed the nuclear test-ban issue with Khrushchev on April 12.

<sup>3</sup>On March 26 anti-Castro group L-66 sunk the *Baku*, a Russian vessel, at the Cuban harbor of Caibarien, only a week after another Soviet ship had been attacked in a Cuban port.

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withdrawn because of pressure by the United States and "trumpets would have been blown" by us.

This letter took note of the criticism of the fact that the Russian SAM sites remained within Cuba. The author of the letter wanted us to know that those ground-air missiles were going to stay in Cuba for the protection of the Cuban people.

The overflights [of Cuba by American reconnaissance planes] that were taking place were deeply resented by the Soviet Union and by Cuba. He then went on to say clearly and distinctly that these U-2 planes would be shot down and that this had better be clearly understood in the United States. The U-2 plane that Eisenhower sent over the Soviet Union was shot down<sup>4</sup> and they had better understand the same thing would be done in those flights over Cuba.

The document then returned to the theme that we were treating the Soviet Union as inferiors. The United States was interested only in making profits from munitions, building up their efforts to dominate the world through counter-revolutionary activity. We were run by capitalists and we should understand that we could not push the Soviet Union around. He also expressed deep concern about the deployment of the Polaris submarines in the Mediterranean, replacing the Jupiter missiles in Turkey and Italy.<sup>5</sup>

At the end of the document it said that Mr. Khrushchev had felt in the past that this confidential exchange had been helpful but he said it had not been used lately because of the provocative statements that had been made by representatives of the United States Government which were offensive to the Soviet Union. However, if President Kennedy wanted to reopen this area of contact he would be glad to accept it. He also said that as far as a meeting between Khrushchev and President Kennedy he thought that that might be helpful. This was, however, left in rather enigmatic terms.

After I read the document I returned it to Dobrynin. I pointed out to him that I had met with him frequently and that he had never talked like this before. He said that was correct. I asked what was the explanation for this document and he said that I should understand that it came from the Soviet Union. I said it demonstrated a complete lack of understanding of the United States and President Kennedy and that I thought it was so insulting and rude to the President and to the United States that I would neither accept it nor transmit its message. I said if they had a message of that kind to deliver it should be delivered formally through the State Department and not through me. I said that during our conversations in the past we attempted to work out matters on a mutually satisfactory basis. I said we might disagree but I never insulted or offended him or his country or Mr. Khrushchev. I said I felt that was the only basis for any kind of relationship. I said I thought this kind of document did not further that effort or our mutual interests and I repeated that if they intended to transmit that kind of message that it should be done through the State Department. He said he could understand my position. He was obviously embarrassed.

<sup>4</sup>A reference to the episode involving Francis Gary Powers in May 1960.

<sup>5</sup>Just before the removal of all the Jupiter missiles from Turkey, the first Polaris submarine was deployed in the Mediterranean on April 1.

### 7. Memorandum from Secretary of the Army's Special Assistant Joseph A. Califano to Secretary of the Army Cyrus R. Vance

*JFK decides which of the covert operations proposed to him (see Document 5) will be carried out.*

Washington, April 9, 1963.

SUBJECT

Presidential Action on Special Group Items Concerning Cuba

1. The President rejected the balloon item on the recommendation of Ed Murrow.

2. The President approved the propaganda item (inciting Cubans to harass, attack and sabotage Soviet military personnel in Cuba) provided every precaution is taken to prevent attribution.

3. The President approved the sabotage of cargoes on Cuban ships and the crippling of ships (through sand in the gears, etc.).

4. With respect to Russian language broadcasts, the President (a) rejected such broadcasts by exile groups over Radio Caribe in the Dominican Republic, (b) rejected black intrusion on Radio Moscow Russian language broadcasts, and (c) withheld a decision on the use of such broadcasts on Radio Liberty from North Carolina, pending consultation with Llewellyn Thompson.

5. Pursuant to Special Group approval of the use of DoD facilities to support training of CIA agents, General Rosson and I met with CIA representatives yesterday and agreed to provide certain weapons training on a military reservation, under such circumstances that the trainees would not know they were being trained by military personnel and would not know they were on a military reservation. Such training will probably commence within the next several days. Parachute jump training under comparable circumstances will commence at a later date but within the next few weeks.

6. We have also agreed with CIA that we would spot about 20 inductees now in training at Fort Jackson whom we consider to have the necessary characteristics for CIA operations inside Cuba. These personnel, along with those given jump training under 5 above, would also be used in advance of the introduction of Special Forces, should there be a decision to invade Cuba.

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## 8. Message from President Kennedy to Chairman Khrushchev

*JFK urges Khrushchev to order further Russian troop withdrawals from Cuba. But he also adopts a conciliatory tone, assuring the Soviet leader that he has no intention of invading Cuba.*

Washington, April 11, 1963.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: It has been some time since I have written you directly, and I think it may be helpful to have some exchange of views in this private channel.<sup>1</sup> As we have both earlier agreed, it is of great importance that we should try to understand each other clearly, so that we can avoid unnecessary dangers or obstacles to progress in the effort for peaceful agreements.<sup>2</sup> . . .

Although together we found workable arrangements for ending the very dangerous crisis which was created when strategic weapons were introduced into Cuba last year, I am sure we can agree that the situation in that island is not yet satisfactory or reassuring to those who care for the peace of the Caribbean. Although the recent withdrawal of a number of your forces has been an important contribution to the reduction of tension, the continued presence of Soviet forces in Cuba can never be regarded with equanimity by the people of this Hemisphere and therefore further withdrawals of such forces can only be helpful.

Meanwhile, we on our side have been endeavoring to reduce tension in this area in a number of ways. For example, the fundamental justification of our practice of peaceful observation of Cuba<sup>3</sup> is precisely that it is necessary to prevent further increase in tension and a repetition of the dangers of last fall. Without such peaceful observation in 1962, this Hemisphere would have been confronted with intolerable danger, and the people of the Hemisphere could not now accept a situation in which they were without adequate information on the situation in Cuba. It is for this reason that this peaceful observation must continue, and that any interference with it from Cuba would necessarily evoke whatever response was necessary to retain it.

We are also aware of the tension unduly created by recent private attacks on your ships in Caribbean waters,<sup>4</sup> and we are taking action to halt those attacks which are in violation of our laws, and obtaining the support of the British Government in preventing the use of their Caribbean islands for this purpose. The efforts of this Government to reduce tensions have, as you know, aroused much

<sup>1</sup>U.S. Ambassador-at-Large Llewellyn Thompson delivered this message to Dobrynin on April 11.

<sup>2</sup>There follows at this point in the text a section on the nuclear test-ban treaty and the proliferation of nuclear arms.

<sup>3</sup>A reference to American aircraft reconnaissance over Cuba.

<sup>4</sup>See Document 6, footnote 3.