

they all "considered Khrushchev too wary and Soviet foreign policy too rational to court a risk of this magnitude".

Where interpretation would be helpful, Schlesinger avoids it. But the only possible interpretation of this sentence is that, with an astounding unanimity, "our best Soviet experts in State and the CIA" were entirely wrong and of indescribable incompetence. This, of course, Schlesinger will not say, even tho his writing says it for him, for the alternative is to say that the entire US administration was wrong, both in its understanding of Khrushchev's intention and its pretenses to legality.

What follows next cannot be passed off as simply a lack of precision in Schlesinger's writing:

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Nonetheless, when a U-2 flight on August 29 showed clear evidence of SAM sites under construction, the President decided to put Moscow on notice. On September 4, the Secretary of State brought over a draft of the warning. The President showed it to the Attorney General, who recommended stiffening it with an explicit statement that we would not tolerate the import of offensive weapons. The draft as revised read that, while we had no evidence of "significant offensive capability either in Cuban hands or under Soviet direction," should it be otherwise, "the gravest issues would arise."

On the same day the Soviet Ambassador in Washington gave the Attorney General an unusual personal message from Khrushchev for the President. The Soviet leader pledged in effect that he would stir up no incidents before the congressional elections in November...

Comment: First, Schlesinger does not say how the "clear evidence" was "of SAM sites" and not any other kind of missile site. He does not say how many or where they were. Sorensen says they are in western Cuba and Abel says that a week later Robert Kennedy had known of "CIA reports that eight SAM sites were already established in Cuba" (A-19).

It is minor that Schlesinger says "the President decided to put Moscow on notice". Abel says (p.20) that it was the Atty Gen who "urged the President to warn the Russians in unmistakable terms" after his meeting with Dobrynin on Sept 4. Schlesinger says that on Sept 4 the Sec of State "brought over a draft of the warning", whereas Abel says not only that the Atty Gen recommended it, but that he "and his assistant, Nicholas deB. Katzenbach, helped to draft the warning issued the same day in President Kennedy's name." (A-20). By this time Schlesinger has become so skillful in his evasive writing that his language doesn't even say that the President ever issued the warning that had been drafted. He talks only of a "draft" and a "revised" draft. But perhaps most dishonest of all is the last sentence quoted above, "The Soviet leader pledged in effect that he would stir up no incidents before the congressional elections in November." A similar interpretation is given by Sorensen who vies with Schlesinger in his deification of the President and undeviating devotion to the fact that the President never erred. Neither Sorensen nor Schlesinger quotes Dobrynin's language, nor do they quote the Atty Gen. They just say that from the kindness of his heart, this old monster and troublemaker, Khrushchev, this Machiavelli in an Astrakhan, told the President, "don't worry, we're not going to make any trouble for you, especially not in Cuba." Abel, who could have gotten his information only from official sources,

puts much the same interpretation on Khrushchev and his message with this very conspicuous exception: He said, "It boiled down to a promise that the Soviet Union would create no trouble for the United States - in Berlin or Southeast Asia - during the election campaign." (A-19)

Note "in Berlin or Southeast Asia" set off by dashes for emphasis. So whether or not Khrushchev was a troublemaking devil, he didn't exempt Cuba from his deviltry.

Because the administration made such a big thing of this Khrushchev message, which certainly is taken out of context and ~~this~~ misrepresented, it is very strange that not one of the three major writers, all of whom drew upon official information, two of whom were participants, found it possible to quote a single word that the Soviet ambassador spoke to the Atty Gen. They all paraphrase it and unless Abel is entirely wrong, which is hard to believe since his book was exclusively on the subject of this crisis and his emphasis is unmistakable, it can only be concluded that both Sorensen and Schlesinger intended nothing less than a major deception because the entire administration case hinged upon 2 propaganda devices; first, that Khrushchev had deceived the President, and second, that the missiles were offensive.

Next Schlesinger quotes an unidentified "Moscow" statement as saying "flatly that the 'armaments and military equipment sent to Cuba are designed exclusively for defensive purposes.'" (p.798)

Again Schlesinger forgets his own dissertation on the American missiles in Turkey where he carefully points out that the only purpose of identical missiles is a first-strike capacity. At no point does Schlesinger or any other administration spokesman, including the President, ever say that, upon the completion of the Cuban missile installation, the Soviet Union planned an attack upon the US. Because, as Schlesinger points out, if these missiles are not to be used in a first strike, they serve only a "deterrent" function, without arguing that the Soviet Union intended to initiate a nuclear attack upon the US, it cannot be argued that the missiles when installed served anything other than a defensive purpose.

Schlesinger also quotes the exact language used by the others and, as a matter of fact, used by the other side, at the UN, that the Soviet Union said it had all the missiles and all the power it needed on its own territory. Earlier Schlesinger had said virtually the same thing in pointing out that, when the Soviets had enough intercontinental missiles installed, they installed no more, allowing the US to go ahead without making any effort to catch up with them in their total number.

While it was not secret that preparations were going forward for an attack on Cuba, Schlesinger then says:

p.799 The statement continued truculently accusing the United States of "preparing for aggression against Cuba and other peace-loving states," concluding that "if the aggressors unleash war our armed forces must be ready to strike a crushing retaliatory blow at the aggressor."

Comment: Of course his purpose here is to show the Russians are a bunch of nasty, warmongering propagandists. But this language does serve a specific and legitimate purpose in any analysis of what happened. The Soviet Union accused the US of "preparing for aggression against Cuba" and warned that, in that event,

"our armed forces must be ready to strike a crushing retaliatory blow ...". In short, the Soviet Union, even at the cost of war, was going to keep its pledge to Cuba.

(A-20) Abel also does not identify the source in "Moscow" of this statement but dates it as of Sept 11.

On Sept 13 "the President responded calmly" when, at his news conference, he said "that the new shipment did not constitute a serious threat" but were Cuba to "become an offensive military base of significant capacity for the Soviet Union, then this country would do whatever must be done to protect its own security and that of its allies."

With this build-up, the concluding sentence of the paragraph reads, "In the meantime he asked Congress for stand-by authority to call up the reserves."

Now. Why should the President ask Congress for stand-by authority to call up the reserves?

In the context of Cuba, the context in which Schlesinger presents this, there could be but a single reason: Need. And the need could come from one of two things: The President's knowledge of an offensive capability or a suspicion so strong that he had to run the great risk, both domestically, especially immediately before an election, and internationally, where the fever readings would go higher on the thermometer.

But for Schlesinger this one sentence with no explanation.

Next, Schlesinger says the President "had also taken the precaution of doubling the frequency of the U-2 flights over Cuba."

How many before he doubled and how many after he doubled Schlesinger sees unworthy of mention. Other sources indicate a beginning number of 2 per week. This gradually increased as the crisis increased in intensity to 6-7 a day.

Abel says (A-22) until late August there were 2 flights monthly, stepped up after Aug 29 discovery of SAM sites to 7 flights by Oct 7.

Next, Schlesinger says there were flights on Sept 5, 17, 26 and 29 and October 5 and 7 and that the "evidence" from the flights "as well as from other sources, indicated a continuing military build-up large in its proportions but still defensive in its character."

Abel's version (A-25) is similar to Schlesinger's but not identical: "They had overflown on September 5, 17, 26, 29 and October 5 and 7, without discovering anything beyond SAM sites, MIG fighter planes on various Cuban airfields, and Komar torpedo boats armed with short-range rockets. All but the September 5 flight, however, had limited their photographic sweeps to that portion of Cuba lying east of Havana. This was the result of a policy decision by the Committee on Overhead Reconnaissance (COMOR) meeting in McGeorge Bundy's office at the White House on September 10." (The reason for the meeting of this committee, whose "very existence was a closely guarded secret", was the shooting down of a Chinese Nationalist U-2 over China the day before.)

Sorensen gives still a different version (p.672) and a different day for one of the flights: "Missions were flown on September 5, 11, 26 and 29, and on October 5 and 7. Bad weather held up flights between September 5 and 26 and made the September 11 photography unusable. Two U-2 incidents elsewhere in the

world also led to a high level examination of that airplane's use and some delays in flights."

Now, because of the repetition of the date Sept 11, it cannot be considered in the first case to have been a typographical error.

Nor can the discrepancy in the dates be regarded lightly. The entire administration position, aside from the fiction of "offensive" weapons, had to do with Khrushchev's deceit, stealth, etc., the fact that the administration did not know of the introduction of missiles into Cuba. Therefore, the exact date of the flight and the circumstances is of great importance. And if on such an important thing any of the authors is wrong, or especially if Sorensen or Schlesinger is wrong, all of their "information" is thereby suspect. It is the kind of thing that, in the context of the Cuba missile crisis, permits no error of any kind.

Then there is the vast difference between Schlesinger's statement, which, like most of his writing, is quite tricky, of the indication of "a continuing military build-up large in its proportions" but which he may evade by saying it came "from other sources", and Sorensen's statement. Without the evasion, what Schlesinger says is essentially what Abel says, and Abel's sources obviously could be nothing but official sources. But Sorensen is specific: "bad weather held up flights between September 5 and 26 and made the September 11 photography unusable." If Sorensen is truthful, Schlesinger is a liar. If Schlesinger is truthful, Sorensen is a liar. And the truth is, both are.

Schlesinger's very next sentence is "The government saw no reason as yet to believe that Khrushchev intended anything beyond this; he had not, so far as we knew, lost his mind." And then he says that only John McCone had a hunch Khrushchev planned "installation of offensive missiles". This is in direct contradiction to any reason Kennedy could have had in the last sentence of the previous paragraph of Schlesinger's writing in asking for stand-by authority to call up the reserves. It is further directly contradicted by the very opening of Sorensen's chapter on this subject, an unmistakable and unforgettable incident which Schlesinger could not have omitted from his book as he does completely by accident. Sorensen says (p.667) the very first words in his chapter, "The Confrontation in Cuba", "on September 6, 1962, in response to his urgent telephone request and after checking with President Kennedy I met with Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin at the Russian Embassy." And at this meeting Sorensen says he took notes at the ambassador's suggestion. On p.668, Sorensen quotes directly from these notes: "He neither contradicted nor confirmed my reference to large numbers of Soviet military personnel, electronics equipment and missile preparations."

Nor is this the only reference to knowledge on the part of the administration of missile preparation in Cuba. The UN debate reveals an administration communication to all its Latin American allies, leaked to Cuba whose Raul Roa used it at the UN debate, of the definite statement by the US of the presence of missiles in Cuba. This was dated Sept 22. It was not denied at the UN. It was not subsequently denied. It is not denied in either Sorensen's or Schlesinger's book. It is, in fact, not mentioned in either book. And, as a matter of fact, neither mentions the existence of the Committee on Overhead Reconnaissance, COMOR, whose functioning obviously is central to the entire missile story, and at this point the mid-term elections so close

also become central to any honest telling of the story. (p.799)

Reverting to the style of the novelist, Sorensen says that "across the world, ships were sliding out of Black Sea harbors with nuclear technicians in their cabins and nuclear missiles in their hatches." The use of the word "nuclear" here is an obvious device that assumes greater point in the total absence of any nuclear warheads in Cuba. The fact is that Khrushchev denied their presence in the letter Abel quotes and offered a search of the ships which was not accepted. Novelist Schlesinger continues in his Man-from-UNCLE fashion, "Khrushchev, having done his best to lull Kennedy by public statements and private messages, now in early September put the second stage of his plan into operation. He could hope that the hurricane season might interfere with the U-2 overflights and that the fall political campaign might inhibit the administration from taking drastic action."

p.800

Imagine such a tough, gruff guy as Khrushchev basing everything he did upon the hope of a hurricane!

What is important, however, is something Schlesinger does not intend, something that is ignored in all the other writing and presumably will be in his, and that is that Khrushchev knew of U-2 overflights. Schlesinger says exactly that here. So, in the absence of any even rudimentary effort to disguise any of the construction work in Cuba is clear evidence of an incontrovertible nature that Khrushchev intended this construction to be detected.

Again without intending to, Schlesinger gives us a real insight into the conduct of the govt on the highest level, the cliff-hanging fear of the President and his close counsellors, of the dire threat to the national security - really the national survival - that hung over the country and the world. Here we have the real Dick Daring:

p.800

.... Lacking photographic verification, the intelligence community treated the information with reserve. In the meantime, it recommended on October 4 a U-2 flight over western Cuba. The recommendation was approved on October 10, and from the eleventh to the thirteenth the pilot and plane waited for the weather to break. Sunday the fourteenth dawned beautiful and cloudless.

Comment: It took about a week to get a U-2 flight approved? Especially one recommended by "the intelligence community", and in the great apprehension about this mysterious build-up in Cuba?

And what about the flights on which all 3 writers, Schlesinger, Sorensen and Abel, are agreed, those of Oct 5 and 7, and about which none says anything not quoted above? There remains another explanation, that Schlesinger again is wrong. But if he is not, Sorensen most certainly is, because he says (p.672), "On October 9 the President - whose personal authorization was required for every U-2 flight and who throughout this period had authorized all flights requested of him - approved a mission over the western end of Cuba ... delayed by bad weather until October 14, the U-2 flew in the early morning hours," etc.

So ~~either~~ either one of these two close advisers and biographers of the President is, to be very kind, wrong, or to be more candid, a liar.

Sorensen's reference to bad weather, and he makes reference to it, relates only to Sept. Schlesinger makes no reference to it.

Abel's version (pp.26-7) is that when ~~the~~ McCone returned from his honeymoon, "to discover that western Cuba had not been overflown for a month," immediately suggested "that a special conference on October 4, that the whole island be photographed at once with special attention to ~~the~~ western end. McCone recalls that several days were lost while various, ^{less} risky, alternatives were examined ..." He agrees that COMOR approved this flight on Oct 9, but not for the whole island, only "taking in an area of western Cuba beyond the range of the peripheral flights which had not been inspected from the air since September 5."

Thus we have the same kaleidoscope, the same picture of the true extent of Washington's apprehension. Western Cuba, the most likely place for the installation of "offensive" missiles, "had not been inspected from the air since September 5."!!!

Here we have another glimpse in the same kaleidoscope of the CIA director who had and continued to hold (see Abel) the belief that Soviet activity was intended for the installation of "offensive" missiles, off on a 3-week honeymoon. Both Schlesinger and Sorensen gloss over the honeymoon except that Schlesinger (p.799) uses it to say ~~the~~ "did not take this thought seriously enough to prevent his going off now for a three weeks' honeymoon in Europe." But according to Abel - and this is not indicated in either Sorensen or Schlesinger - McCone was "fretting and bombarding his deputy, General Marshall S. Carter, with telegrams. President Kennedy never saw the so-called honeymoon telegrams, sent on September 7, 10, 15 and 16. General Carter did not distribute them outside the CIA." (A-23) Is this a reflection of the CIA's attitude?

But it would not seem to be for Abel (p.14) quotes the issue of Aviation Week and Space Technology dated Oct 1 as saying, "Pentagon strategists consider the present arms build-up in Cuba the first step toward eventual construction of intermediate-range ballistic missile emplacements."

Nor is this all. Col John Ralph Wright, Jr., of the Defense Intelligence Agency, studied the results of unspecified Sept overflights "with meticulous care", according to Abel (p.26) and notice the odd trapezoidal pattern near San Cristobal which "resembled the placement of missile installations photographed repeatedly by pilots like Gary Powers over the Soviet Union." A few pages later, where he also has an extremely revealing footnote (p.29), Abel describes this as "to a skilled interpreter of aerial photographs ... the evidence was compelling, if not yet conclusive." But in the footnote, "In June 1963, Colonel Wright's crucial contribution was acknowledged with the award of an Oak Leaf Cluster to the Legion of Merit he had received ten years earlier," and the citation says, "He performed a unique service to his country by single-handedly analyzing a series of intelligence reports ... pinpointing the location of the first medium-range ballistic missiles deployed by the USSR in the western hemisphere." His citation says that it was he who "recommended" the coverage of Oct 14.

Returning to Schlesinger and the Oct 14 flight, he fails to say when the flight was made. In this he is consistent with his further comment on its results, but his language about the flight is merely "Sunday the 14th dawned beautiful and cloudless." He at this point launches in to an attack on Sen Keating. Sorensen

says (p.672) that "the U-2 flew in the early morning hours of that cloudless Sunday ...". Abel has more detail. He begins by saying that at the suggestion of McNamara, the CIA pilots were canned. The CIA had used Air Force officers transferred to their payroll "ostensibly as civilians, after a process of quasi-separation known in the trade as 'sheep-dipping'" (A-25).

Over CIA objections (a-27) 2 Air Force regulars, Majors Rudolph Anderson Jr and Richard S. Heyser, took over on the 14th. "Some CIA people took this hard. General Carter, in McCone's month-long absence/ (Note Schlesinger says 3 weeks), had appealed to the White House, arguing that intelligence was properly the CIA's business and that it had its own control center to go with the planes, the trained pilots, and the experience. McGeorge Bundy dismissed the appeal." But Abel, while not giving the time of the flight, says, "two Air Force pilots ... climbed into ~~the borrowed flying~~ their borrowed flying machines" (A-27), so there is some confusion which Abel does not minimize by concluding his chapter "Sunday October 14, 1962" (also p.27) by saying, "Then they flew home, skidding in safely with the wings folded down ... Their film magazines were quickly unloaded and transferred to a waiting jet for the flight to Washington." But the implication of Abel is there were 2 planes and 2 pilots for the one flight.

Schlesinger's attack on Sen Keating is the sneaky thing in which he is a specialist. He says Keating "had also been receiving the refugee reports, and he treated them with no reserve at all. At the end of August he began a campaign to force the government into some unspecified form of action. In October he began to talk about offensive missile bases." He could have given the date - it was the 10th. Altho the confusion may be cleared up on the next page, here elimination of the date might be calculated to lead the reader to believe Keating did not say anything until after the administration knew and announced its knowledge (p.800). Again playing the sneak with literary structures, Schlesinger attributes to an unidentified "some" the belief Keating "had other motives" than "the national safety" and he invokes Roger Hilsman who later wrote of Keating that "until the Senator comes forward with a better explanation than he has so far supplied, one of two possible conclusions is inescapable: ... peddling someone's rumors for some purpose of his own, despite the highly dangerous/national situation; or, alternatively, he had informed the United States Government did not have that could have guided a U-2 to the missile sites before October 14, and at less risk to the pilot." (p.801)

Schlesinger's concluding paragraph of this subsection begins, "Now on the fourteenth the U-2 plane (note the singular) returned from its mission." He in general, without saying where the laboratory was, says the negatives were "swiftly" sent there "then to the interpretation center, where specialists pored over the blown-up photographs frame by frame. Late Monday afternoon, reading the obscure and intricate markings, they identified a launching pad ... on the ground in San Cristobal." (p.801) But Sorensen says (p.673) "By Monday evening, October 15, the analysts were fairly certain of their findings" and Abel places no time upon it at all, saying (A-30) that "in McCone's absence (he had left Washington at 3 p.m. because of the death of his stepson, Paul J. Piggott, in a Calif sportscar accident), General

Carter was the first to receive word of the San Cristobal discovery from the photo-analysts of the National Photographic Interpretation Center." The only time given by Abel (A-30) is the time McGeorge Bundy found out, at 8:30 p.m., told by telephone by CIA Deputy Director Cline. It is with this event, the informing of Bundy, that Schlesinger begins subsection 3 of this chapter.

3. The Executive Committee (pp.801-6).

According to Schlesinger, Bundy was informed about 8:30. But according to Sorensen (p.673), "between 8 and 10 p.m., the top CIA officials were notified and they notified in turn the Defense and State intelligence chiefs and, at his home, McGeorge Bundy."

It would seem that, with all the information coming from a single source, those few in the govt privy and with both Schlesinger and Sorensen among those both privy and closest to the President, there should be no discrepancy of any kind, nor should there be any question about the time, even to the exact minute, especially when dealing with intelligence and of such a nature.

Schlesinger, Sorensen and Abel agree that Bundy decided not to tell the President that night since he had nothing with which to brief him and wouldn't until the morning. There is only a 15-minute difference between Sorensen's "about 9 a.m." time and Schlesinger's 8:45 a.m. Tuesday, with the President pajamaed and in his bedroom. Abel (A-43) adds details that at 8 o'clock Bundy was briefed by an intelligence officer with two photo-analysts. He studied the photographs and accompanying intelligence reports, then went to Kennedy's living quarters where, according to Abel, the President was sitting on the edge of the bed looking at the morning papers.

Schlesinger ~~never mentions~~ does not quote Bundy's reason for not informing the President immediately. Abel (A-31) and Sorensen (P.673) do, each one with a different quotation. The time and source of Abel's is not given, but Sorensen says that ~~over four months~~ "over four months later, almost as an afterthought, the President asked why he didn't telephone him that night and Bundy responded with a memorandum 'for your memoirs'."

When Kennedy was satisfied the evidence was conclusive, he told Bundy one way or another he must bring the threat to an end (p.801). Then:

P.802

.... He then directed Bundy to institute low-level photographic flights and to set up a meeting of top officials. Privately he was furious; if Khrushchev could pull this after all his protestations and denials, how could he ever be ~~trusted on anything?~~ trusted on anything? The meeting, beginning at eleven forty-five that morning, went on with intermissions for the rest of the week. The group soon became known as the Executive Committee, presumably of the National Security Council; the press later dubbed it familiarly ExCom, though one never heard that phrase at the time. It carried on its work with the most exacting secrecy; nothing could be worse than to alert the Russians before the United States had decided on its own course.

Comment: Of course, the pretense that the Russians had to be kept from knowing that we knew is little short of childish. Just 2 pages earlier (p.800) Schlesinger has sought to explain Khrushchev's action in the light of the American official line by saying he had pinned his hopes on the hurricane season interfering with the U-2 flights, so there was no doubt that everybody knew the Russians knew all about the U-2 flights. There was nothing else to which the US could "alert the Russians" because certainly the Russians knew what the Russians were doing!

Schlesinger names the ExCom:

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... For this reason its members - the President, the Vice-President, Rusk, McNamara, Robert Kennedy, General Taylor, McCone, Dillon, Adlai Stevenson, Bundy, Sorensen, Ball, Gilpatric, Llewellyn Thompson, Alexis Johnson, Edwin Martin, with others brought in on occasion, among them Dean Acheson and Robert Lovett - had to attend their regular meetings, keep as many appointments as possible and preserve the normalities of life....

Comment: Schlesinger's version of the ExCom is not quite the same as Sorensen's (pp.674-5).

But neither list cites Schlesinger as a member.

Because the President's presence seemed "to have a constraining effect, preliminary meetings (of the ExCom) were held without him." Sorensen agrees. The ExCom considered "every alternative" ranging "from living with the missiles to taking them out by surprise attack, from making the issue with Castro to making it with Khrushchev." (p.802). Almost all the members of the ExCom "found themselves moving from one position to another." The ExCom estimated "about ten days before the missiles would be on ~~the~~ pads ready for firing." According to Schlesinger, this "meant that the response, could not, for example, be confided to the United Nations, where the Soviet delegates would have ~~been~~ ample opportunity to stall action until the nuclear weapons were in place and on target. It meant that we could not even risk the delay involved in consulting our allies. It meant that the total responsibility had to fall on the United States and its President." (p.803)

What it really meant was the United States had no intention of abiding by its commitment to the UN, to the Charter of the UN, and to international law. Unless, of course, it could convert the UN to its own purposes, to make it an adjunct of US policy.

As did others writing on the same subject, Schlesinger says that at the beginning of the discussions because the President "made clear that acquiescence was impossible" there seemed to be nothing possible except an airstrike which impelled the Atty Gen to scribble a wry note "I know now how Tojo felt when he was planning Pearl Harbor." Schlesinger then comments about a statement of the Atty Gen's otherwise unrecorded, in saying they needed more alternatives as an example of "countervailing pressure" Robert Kennedy suggested such as "by placing nuclear missiles in Berlin". Here again is a revelation the President's advisers considered anything they wanted to do, anything that remotely flickered through their minds, as proper and legal - that whatever the US decided to do, wanted to do, even thought it might do - was, ipso facto, right.

The military build-up in the Caribbean that followed was conveniently covered by "long-scheduled" exercises that week. The amphibious task force was built up to include 40,000 Marines and there were 5,000 more in Guantanamo. The Army prepared its 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions for immediate deployment and soon altogether gathered "more than 100,000 troops in Florida. SAC bombers left Florida airfields to make room for tactical fighter aircraft flown in from bases all over the country. Air defense facilities were stripped from places outside the range of the Cuban missiles and re-installed in the Southeast. As the days went by, 14,000 reservists were recalled to fly transport planes in the eventuality of airborne operations." (P.803)

Again consider the pretense of secrecy with all of this publicly going on (p.803). Meanwhile the Pentagon had undertaken a "technical analysis of the requirements for a successful strike". With typical propaganda purposes in mind that could certainly have deceived the President, this was formulated as

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... a "surgical" strike confined to the nuclear missile bases alone would leave the airports and IL-28s untouched; moreover, we could not be sure in advance that we had identified or could destroy all the missile sites. A limited strike therefore might expose the United States to nuclear retaliation. Military prudence called for a much larger strike to eliminate all sources of danger; this would require perhaps 500 sorties. Anything less, the military urged, would destroy our credibility before the world and leave our own nation in intolerable peril. Moreover, this was a heaven-sent opportunity to get rid of the Castro regime forever and re-establish the security of the hemisphere.

Comment: To Schlesinger this was "a strong argument, urged by strong men." But from the "arguments on the other side" which Schlesinger then quotes, it is clear he was not referring to the strength of their minds for they could hardly have thought, or if they had thought, paid any attention to consequences:

p.804

... The Soviet experts pointed out that even a limited strike would kill the Russians manning the missile sites and might well provoke the Soviet Union into drastic and unpredictable response, perhaps nuclear war. The Latin American experts added that a massive strike would kill thousands of innocent Cubans and damage the United States permanently in the hemisphere. The Europeanists said the world would regard a surprise attack as an excessive response. Even if it did not produce Soviet retaliation against the United States, it would invite the Russians to move against Berlin in circumstances where the blame would fall, not on them, but on us..."

day
Comment: The next ~~time~~ day Sec McNamara "advanced an idea which had been briefly mentioned the day before and from which he did not thereafter deviate", a "naval blockade designed to stop the further entry of offensive weapons into Cuba and hopefully to force the removal of the missiles already there." (p.804)

In McNamara's mind and Schlesinger's and everybody else's this was a blockade, illegal and an act of war. It was not until later that it was dignified with the euphemism "quarantine" (p.804).

As the discussions in the ExCom proceeded thru Thursday, airstrike supporters said a blockade "would not neutralize the weapons already within Cuba" and "that it could not possibly bring enough pressure on Khrushchev to remove those weapons, that it

would permit work to go ahead on the bases and that it would mean another Munich." (p.805) They feared a retaliatory blockade on Berlin. But the ExCom began towards the end of the day to favor a blockade.

The arguments of the airstrike advocates are cogent and should have been and still must be considered in any analysis. It certainly could not neutralize the weapons already in Cuba, nor, unless ~~xxx~~ he were willing to be pressured, could it in any way cause Khrushchev to remove the weapons and they would remain as the threat which caused all of Kennedy's excessive reaction. So, without Khrushchev's cooperation, a blockade was meaningless and if he were going to cooperate a quid pro quo of some kind was an essential for him. From this the natural question is, what quid pro quo and had he planned for this eventuality? Had he figured that the US would not dare unleash a nuclear war and as a consequence there could be no solution except one in which he was in agreement?

It is beyond credibility that this thought did not occur to the Pres or his advisers. Yet they do not, from the writings of Schlesinger, Sorensen and Abel, seem to have ever considered this.

Schlesinger says the Pres proceeded with his earlier scheduled meeting with Gromyko "in the interests of normality". He finds this "one of the more extraordinary moments of an extraordinary week" because both Kennedy and Gromyko knew of the missiles in Cuba but Gromyko "did not know that Kennedy knew it".

This, of course, is an entirely foolish assumption on Schlesinger's part but a pretense that is indispensable to the maintenance of the administration's fictitious version of the entire Cuba missile crisis. The Russians had publicly done everything except say they had installed such missiles in Cuba. They had been careful to explain their purposes in diplomatic language and they had done nothing to camouflage the work done in Cuba. Sorensen bothers to make no explanation but Schlesinger (p.800) wants us to believe that the Russians figured an unending series of hurricanes would prevent American aerial reconnaissance and that the Russians were willing to gamble on such an extreme improbability as the basis for all of their intentions! Gromyko emphasized "Soviet aid had solely the purpose of contributing to the defense capabilities of Cuba".

Wisely, Schlesinger pays but slight attention to this meeting so that he can more readily ignore what other writers have pointed out, that when the Pres read the "key sentences from his statement of September 13" Gromyko held his ground and made a very forceful response.

The intellectual tone and level of Schlesinger's writing is illustrated by his account of the evening meeting of the ExCom Thursday, Oct 18, at which he said the Pres "was evidently attracted by the idea of the blockade" because "it avoided war ..." and could be "carried out within the framework of the Organization of American States and the Rio Treaty."

There is no question about it, blockade was in itself an act of war. Hence, it did not avoid war but shifted the choice of the initiation of hostilities to the Russians. And the only way it could be carried out within the "framework" of the OAS was by the US govt depending upon a rubber stamp which, of course, it knew it had (p.805).

Now Schlesinger illustrates his historian's impartiality by saying that if we were to launch "a surprise attack" which would, of course, kill uncountable thousands of Cubans as well as an indeterminate number of Russians and be an act of war that, in the context of the public Soviet commitment to defend Cuba, an act initiating nuclear war, were the Soviets to respond "against Berlin or the United States itself" this response would be "insensate".

The Pres ordered preparations for a weapons blockade to go into effect on Mon morning the 22nd (p.806).

There seems to be a conflict with Sorensen here, but in fact there is not. Sorensen (p.671-2) gives the impression the decision to plan for the blockade was made on Fri morning, but the fact that the Pres favored it Thurs night is indicated on p.691.

4. The Decision (pp.806-8)

When Kennedy left for a previously scheduled political tour, the ExCom met at the State Dept at 11 o'clock Fri morning. Several of its members began to "reargue the inadequacy of the blockade" to which Schlesinger said Ted Sorensen protested "that a decision had been reached the night before and should not be reopened now". This is not the version Sorensen gives (p.692) but it is not in contradiction to it because Sorensen does not say whether or not he protested this effort. Schlesinger's version of the airstrike advocates' position is "why not confront the world with a fait ~~accom~~ accompli by taking out the bases in a clean and swift operation?" Another felt "it was a test of wills" and "the sooner there was a showdown, the better". Still another said "now or never" and the US must "hit the bases before they became operational". The airstrike could leave on Sun (another remarkable parallel to Pearl Harbor) "if we took a decision that morning".

Again the lack of morality and the lack of any interest in or concept of legality. McNamara remained strongly opposed to an airstrike and in support of the blockade. Robert Kennedy "did not believe" the Pres of the US could order another Pearl Harbor (P.806). His argument was rather eloquent.

In a footnote to what he describes as an ExCom meeting at 4 o'clock Fri the 19th, "for a discussion of the competing scenarios" Schlesinger goes into the defense Sec of State Rusk made to AP State Dept correspondent John M. Hightower, whose article appeared on Aug 22, 1965. Over Rusk's noncommittal attitude during the early meetings of the ExCom, Hightower said Rusk was angered at the criticism and said it was his function to advise the Pres "and he did not think he should commit himself before all the facts were in". While he didn't participate in the argument for several days, he had instructed Undersec of State George Ball "to take a free hand" and to present "the State Department viewpoint". At this meeting, Schlesinger says, "the balance of opinion clearly swung back to the blockade (though, since a blockade was technically an act of war, it was thought better to refer to it as a quarantine)." Ignoring that he had just said the

the blockade might prevent war, with only the flimsy figleaf of the word "technicality", Schlesinger here does admit it is an act of war. And he admits the use of the word "quarantine" was but a propaganda device.

There is a reflection in what follows of what may have been ulterior motives on the part of the military in arguing against the blockade, which at this point Schlesinger begins to refer to without quotation marks as a quarantine. "The case was strengthened too when the military representatives conceded that a quarantine now would not exclude a strike later." (p.807) It must have been obvious; from the very beginning that this was the case and the motives of the military in pretending otherwise are highly suspect. The clear inference is that they were ~~not~~ actively seeking the means of starting a war. They may have had illusions about whether or not the Russians would enter such a war, but they could have been nothing but illusions.

Here ~~and~~ continuing on to the next page Schlesinger presents as having occurred at this point in the sequence of events what Sorensen (pp.692-3) and Abel do not here mention:

pp.807/8

... Someone observed that the United States would have to pay a price to get them out; perhaps we should throw in our now obsolescent and vulnerable Jupiter missile bases in Italy and Turkey, whose removal the Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy as well as the Secretary of Defense had recommended in 1961. After a couple of hours, Adlai Stevenson, who had had to miss the day's meetings because of UN commitments, arrived from New York. He expressed his preference for the quarantine over the strike but wondered whether it might not be better to try the diplomatic route also. We must, he said, start thinking about our negotiating position; for example, a settlement might include the neutralization of Cuba under international guarantees and UN inspection; demilitarization would, of course, include our own base at Guantanamo as well as the Soviet installations. The integrity of Cuba should be guaranteed. He also echoed the suggestion that we might want to consider giving up the Italian and Turkish bases now, since we were planning to do so eventually.

Comment: The use of the word "Someone" cannot reflect Schlesinger's inability to find out who the person was. It can reflect only his desire to avoid mentioning the person's name and since this observation of the unidentified "someone" bears a remarkable resemblance to what ultimately evolved, with the character of Schlesinger's writing, it would seem as though this someone is a person who or whose position Schlesinger does not like:

Although "the schedule" called for the Pres to speak Sun night "by Saturday morning" uncompleted preparations led to the decision to postpone it a day. Meanwhile, the Pres, pleading a cold, canceled his political trip for a return to Washington where he presided over the Sat afternoon ExCom meeting in what Schlesinger calls "its final debate". Here McNamara still supported the blockade and "the military, with some civilian support, argued for the strike". When Stevenson "spoke with force about the importance of a political program", the Pres "agreed in principle but disagreed with his specific proposals." It might have been more precise to say some of his specific proposals. The ExCom breakdown was 11 for blockade, 6 for airstrike. At this

meeting the Pres "issued orders to get everything ready" for the blockade. He held a Sun morning "final conference with the military leaders" which "satisfied him that the strike would be a mistake". As Schlesinger says, "his course was now firmly set" (p.808).

5. The Crisis (pp.808-13)

Schlesinger knew nothing about what was going on, nothing about the secret discussions in the White House, until informed Sat morning by Adlai Stevenson who had obtained the Pres's permission to tell Schlesinger. His purpose was to ask Schlesinger's help with his speech he would make early in the week at the Security Council. By inference, but not necessarily so, Schlesinger worked on a draft.

Sat night "a sense of premonitory excitement began to engulf Washington" after the Pres returned unexpectedly from his political tour and Rusk canceled a speech he had been to make. On Fri a British delegation for intelligence conferences with the CIA deduced from suspicions based, according to Schlesinger, on things other than either Abel or Sorensen wrote about, ~~which~~ such as their observation of beds being moved into Pentagon offices, deduced something was afoot in Cuba. James Reston made similar deductions, wrote a story about them, and after he checked it with the White House "the President himself called Orville Dryfoos, the publisher of the Times, to say that publication might confront him with a Moscow ultimatum before he had ~~achieved~~ the chance to put his own plans into effect; once again, the Times killed a story about Cuba." Reston had "even speculated about nuclear missiles". By Sat night "the town was alive with speculation and anticipation" (p.809). On Sun Stevenson noted his thought about UN strategy. "He saw no hope of mustering enough votes in the UN to authorize action against Cuba in advance" but was more optimistic about the OAS whose "approval could provide some protection in law and a great deal in public opinion". At the UN he said, in Schlesinger's words, "we must seize the initiative, bringing our case to the Security Council at the same time we impose the quarantine". In order to "avert resolutions against" the blockade, he proposed suggesting "a political path out of the military crisis". Schlesinger describes essentially what Stevenson ultimately proposed at the UN, saying it "centered on the removal of Soviet military equipment and personnel" which from the US point of view perhaps it did. But from the Soviet point of view the "non-invasion guarantee" was undoubtedly its center. Stevenson also wanted to promise withdrawal from Guantanamo and removal of US missiles from Turkey and Italy.

The Pres, however, "rightly", according to Schlesinger, "regarded any political program as premature. He wanted to concentrate on a single issue - the enormity of the introduction of the missiles and the absolute necessity for their removal. Stevenson's negotiating program was accordingly rejected." Schlesinger said Stevenson "took this realistically". Some of the ExCom "felt strongly that the thought of negotiation at this

point would be taken as an admission of the moral weakness of our case and the military weakness of our posture." (p.810).

The fact is that within just a few days Stevenson made just such proposals and the solution was just such a solution. But the ExCom was consistent: It was almost without exception wrong in not understanding, in what it wanted to do, and in what it did not want to do. Some of the ExCom "worried considerably over the weekend (and some of them vocally;/thereafter) whether ... Stevenson would make the American arguments with sufficient force in the UN debate." Apparently Stevenson had as many enemies as a peaceful solution.

Working all day and well into the night at the State Dept on the speech with Schlesinger were Harlan Cleveland, Joseph ~~Sisco~~ Sisco and Thomas Wilson.

Schlesinger reflects the Pres's mind as of Mon morning, Oct 22:

p.811

... It was strange, he said, how no one in the intelligence community had anticipated the Soviet attempt to transform Cuba into a nuclear base; everyone had assumed that the Russians would not be so stupid as to offer us this pretext for intervention. I asked why he thought Khrushchev had done such an amazing thing. He said that, first, it might draw Russia and China closer together, or at least strengthen the Soviet position in the communist world, by showing that Moscow was capable of bold action in support of a communist revolution; second, that it would radically redefine the setting in which the Berlin problem could be reopened after the election; third, that it would deal the United States a tremendous political blow. When I remarked that the Russians must have supposed we would not respond, Kennedy said, "They thought they had us either way. If we did nothing, we would be dead. If we reacted, they hoped to put us in an exposed position, whether with regard to Berlin or Turkey or the UN."

Comment: So apparently the Pres also had no understanding of what the Soviets were aiming for.

Apparently Schlesinger from what follows did draft a speech Stevenson was to make. The Pres read it at 11 a.m. Mon morning, made a few omissions. Robert Kennedy "drew me aside to say, 'We're counting on you to watch things in New York. . . . We will have to make a deal at the end, but we must stand absolutely firm now. Concessions must come at the end of negotiation, not at the beginning.' Then, clutching the speech, I caught the first plane to New York." (p.811)

Schlesinger then tells pretty much the same story about Prime Minister Obote of Uganda as Sorensen, adding, however, that "Angier Biddle Duke of the State Department remarked to Obote on their way back to Blair House that a crisis of some sort was imminent...." Duke was not supposed to know about it, and of course this is another reflection of the fiction of "security" and "secrecy".

Schlesinger's version of the 5 o'clock briefing of Congressional leaders, many of whom had been flown in ~~xxx~~ by the Air Force, etc., is essentially that of the others. Sen Russell of Ga disagreed with the blockade and said the only solution was invasion. "To the President's surprise, Fulbright, who had opposed invasion so eloquently eighteen months before, now supported Russell." Schlesinger adds this in parentheses:

(Kennedy told me later, "The trouble is that, when you get a group of senators together, they are always dominated by the man who takes the boldest and strongest line. That is what happened the other day. After Russell spoke, no one wanted to take issue with him. When you can talk to them individually, they are reasonable.")

Comment: The President spoke at 7 o'clock. Schlesinger quotes excerpts (pp.812-3).

6. The Reaction (pp.813-9)

Comment: Schlesinger begins this subsection with a plaint against the UN: "...like a permanent political convention: so many people to be considered and cajoled, so many issues going at once, such an inherent unpredictability about the parliamentary sequence." There were too many things that had to be done before the US got its way; and of course the UN should work automatically on behalf of the US administration. Poor Stevenson! He "had to talk so much to UN delegations from other nations ..." (p.813)/

Stevenson was speaking while the last pages of his speech were being retyped/across the street in US headquarters. By pre-arrangement Edwin Martin notified Harlan Cleveland when the OAS Resolution passed, and Cleveland called Sisco in NY. "Watching Stevenson on television, Cleveland could see Sisco leave the chamber to take the call, then in a moment return and place the text of the resolution on the desk in front of Stevenson." (p.814)

Either this ;was a very short resolution or, what is more likely, it was passed in exactly the US form, word for word, and Sisco had an advance copy. (p.814)

Again the novelist in Schlesinger replaces the historical in his dramatic account of workmen in Cuba "laboring day and night to complete the bases. Forty-two medium-range nuclear missiles were being unpacked and prepared for launching pads with desperate speed." Without doubt, every effort was made to speed things up, but for the sense of the drama Schlesinger chooses to ignore the fact that some of the missiles were already in place.

If Schlesinger's concept of historical writing takes hold, we will have to parallel poetic license, Historian's license.

He says, "Ninety ships of the American fleet, backed up by sixty-eight aircraft squadrons and eight aircraft carriers, were moving into position to intercept and search the onrushing ships." The aircraft swadrons, the fast destroyers, the speedy aircraft carriers, these just "moved" but the lumbering tubs of the Soviet merchant marine and those ships they chartered, these were "onrushing".

In an effort to make it seem as tho American support was greater than in reality it was, Schlesinger here begins to streamline excessively. He refers to Acheson's trip to DeGaulle, quoting the general, "If there is a war, I will be with you. But there will be no war."

Without elaboration Schlesinger says, "The British had received their first notification on Saturday, October 20." (p.815)

And in quoting Macmillan's assurances "that ~~this would~~ Britain would give all the support it could in the Security Council," Schlesinger nonetheless has to admit that Macmillan "did not then or later offer to take part in specific action on the Atlantic." According to Schlesinger, "The President, no doubt" detected "an element of reserve in Macmillan's tone..." and the Pres says ~~that Khrushchev's~~ of Khrushchev his "action had so contradicted all the Kremlinologists had prophesied that it was necessary to revise our whole estimate of his desperation or ambition or both." The one thing that never occurred to the President or anybody else that had to be revised was the "Kremlinologists" who understood propaganda but not the Kremlin.

But British reaction was much less favorable than Schlesinger wants to indicate, altho he does quote some. In his own words, "maybe CIA was up to its old tricks again."

p.816/7

...Even Hugh Gaitskell doubted the legality of the quarantine and wondered why Kennedy had not gone first to the United Nations; and the Economist ... warned against "forcing a showdown over the shipment of Russian arms to Cuba." The Manchester Guardian said on Tuesday that, if Khrushchev had really brought in nuclear missiles, "he has done so primarily to demonstrate to the U.S. and the world the meaning of American bases close to the Soviet frontier." The Guardian added two days later, "In the end the United States may find that it has done its cause, its friends, and its own true interests little good." By Saturday it was suggesting that Britain vote against the United States in the UN. A group of intellectuals - A. J. Ayer, A. J. P. Taylor, Richard Titmuss and others - attacked the quarantine and advocated British neutrality. The Tribune wrote, "It may well be that Kennedy is risking blowing the world to hell in order to sweep a few Democrats into office."

Comment: To lighten his burden Schlesinger switches, as do the others who have written, to a quotation from "the pacifist, Bertrand Russell". Russell had cabled Khrushchev an appeal "for your further help in lowering the temperature ... your continued forbearance is our great hope" and with judicious exercise of his historian's license, after the word "continued", Schlesinger added in brackets "sic". He brackets this with an excerpt from Russell's cable to Kennedy, "Your action desperate ... (omissions in original) No conceivable justification. We will not have mass murder ... end this madness." To be certain there is emphasis on Bertrand Russell who is singled out and the well poisoned against him by Schlesinger's out-of-context quotation of his having called "Kennedy 'much more wicked than Hitler'", both telegrams are separated by conspicuous areas of blank space on the page and are set in small caps.

Conceding there was opposition to Kennedy in the US is likewise no simple matter for Schlesinger but he was able to surmount the problem with equal intellectual dishonesty in the following manner - and this is all he has to say on the subject:

P.817 There was some of the same in the United States. The followers of Stuart Hughes's peace party denounced the quarantine, sought excuses for Khrushchev and prayed for American acceptance of the missiles.

Comment: Schlesinger has a special dislike for the Harvard historian H. Stuart Hughes, his former colleague on the faculty there and in OSS. He singles Hughes out for ridicule on seven different

occasions in this book, in itself a piece of uninhibited dishonesty for there was no opportunity for answer. One of his techniques is to call Hughes the radical left equivalent of Barry Goldwater and the Birchers on the right and to pretend that Hughes was a Communist of some kind, a statement he didn't dare make outright. For example, Schlesinger sees fit to italicize part of a phrase wrenched from a political announcement of candidacy by Hughes in 1962 in which he "attacked 'the deadening similarity of the major parties' and declared it time for 'a new kind of politics in America.'" (p.749) or "The radical right ... constituted, of course, a tiny minority ... and the radical left, despite Stuart Hughes, a tinier still." (p.756) He again brackets Hughes with the radical right on p.833.

Nor is this unusual in Schlesinger's book. He uses it as a weapon. He lashes those he does not like, if he has to drag them in by the heels to do it.

While the President was dining Tues night with his old friend, British Ambassador David Omsby Gore,

pp.817/8

.... In a while Robert Kennedy walked in, bleak, tired and disheveled. He had just been to see Ambassador Dobrynin in an effort to find out whether the Soviet ships had instructions to turn back if challenged on the high seas. The Soviet Ambassador, the Attorney General said, seemed very shaken, out of the picture and unaware of any instructions. This meant that the imposition of the quarantine the next day might well bring a clash.

Comment: Schlesinger in his 1100 pages has ample space for the indulging of his petty dislikes but for something like the preceding quotation he has no comment, nor does he bring his tremendous intellectual capacity, his analytical powers, into play to indicate that there could in any way be a significance to the Soviet Ambassador's being "very shaken, out of the picture and unaware of any instructions." This, bracketed with what at least here Schlesinger chooses to ignore, a similar plight for Soviet UN Ambassador Zorin, is indicative of exactly what the Atty Gen ~~tham~~ thought, that he was "out of the picture" and this in turn is indicative of anything but what the official American interpretation of the entire Soviet ploy was. It was indicative of the tightest and most explosive kind of control exercised on his project by Khrushchev. But again, had Schlesinger gone off into such an analysis, who well knew the potential and he is not about to admit the truth.

Kennedy agreed with the proposal of the British Ambassador that the US "make the interceptions much closer to Cuba and thereby give the Russians a little more time." He called McNamara and "in Schlesinger's words "over emotional Navy protests, issued the appropriate instruction." This decision was of vital importance in postponing the moment of irreversible action." None of the geniuses in the White House thought of it. Nor had those in the Pentagon and in each case the reason for not giving the Pres this only too obvious counsel is highly suspect and indicative of a desire for an armed clash. (p.818)

Schlesinger makes no effort to underestimate the serious possibilities of the Cuban missile crisis. But in an 1100-page work, he finds space for only 24 pages on it and much of these are devoted to his personal indulgences, reminiscences, lengthy

adulations of the Pres (in the glow of which he also basks) and an extensive dedication to propaganda. Compared to even Sorensen's skimpy treatment of the subject, Schlesinger is barren, argumentative and an exercise in casuistry.

He devotes a few pages of the following chapter to the ending of the crisis.

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To begin this chapter, Schlesinger resorts to the crystal ball which he reads, greatly benefited by his own political astigmatism:

p.820

Within the Kremlin, so far as one could tell, there was confusion. The Russians had obviously anticipated neither the ~~quick~~ quick discovery of the bases nor the quick imposition of the quarantine. Their diplomats across the world were displaying all the symptoms of improvisation, as if they had been told nothing of the placement of the missiles and had received no instructions what to say about them. Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin himself gave every indication of ignorance and confusion.

Comment: There undoubtedly was confusion in the diplomatic corps which clearly and highly unusually had not been informed by Khrushchev. But "within the Kremlin"? And the Russians "had obviously" not anticipated "the quick discovery of the bases"? Everything Schlesinger has had to say on this subject, as well as what Sorensen and Abel say, makes sense only if the Russians depended upon "quick discovery of the bases", which they had made not even the most rudimentary effort to conceal.

At the UN on Wed,

p.820/1

...~~Then~~ U Thant made an unexpected intervention, proposing that the Soviet Union suspend its arms shipments and the United States its quarantine to allow an interlude for negotiations. Khrushchev accepted this thought at once and with evident pleasure; but, from our viewpoint, it equated aggression and response, said nothing about the missiles already in Cuba, permitted work to go forward on the sites and contained no provisions for verification. Still, while New York and Washington agreed in rejecting U Thant's proposal, the manner of the rejection caused debate. Some in Washington appeared to fear any response which would 'entrap' us in a negotiating process; it seemed to us in New York that they must be bent to clear the road for an air strike and an invasion. Stevenson and McCloy strongly recommended a response to U Thant which would keep the diplomatic option alive.

Comment: So much for the American dedication to the UN and its machinery. And note also the consistent and dishonest use of the word "quarantine" as a substitute for "blockade". There is no such thing as a quarantine in this sense.

1. Waiting (821-4)

Comment: Wed night Schlesinger got a phone call from Averell Harriman.

p.821

.... Speaking with unusual urgency, he said that Khrushchev was desperately signaling a desire to cooperate in moving toward a peaceful solution. Harriman set forth the evidence: Khrushchev's suggestion of a summit meeting in his reply to Bertrand Russell; his well-publicized call on the American singer Jerome Hines the night ~~after~~ before after a Moscow concert; his amiable if menacing talk with an American businessman, William Knox of Westinghouse International; the indications that afternoon that the nearest Soviet ships were slowing down and changing course. This was not the behavior of a man who wanted war, Harriman said; it was the behavior of a man who was begging our help to get off the hook. Khrushchev had sent up similar signals after the U-2 affair in 1960, Harriman continued, and Eisenhower had made the mistake of ignoring him; we must not repeat that error now."

Comment: Schlesinger, of course, has to have Khrushchev "desperate" and "begging our help to get off the hook". The ridiculousness of this is clear in the second sentence where Schlesinger said "Khrushchev had sent up similar signals after the U-2 affair in 1960" where clearly it was not Khrushchev who was "desperate" or trying to get himself off the hook.

Was there anything desperate in "a well-publicized" greeting to an American artist? Or was it a gesture intended in part to counteract the warlike emanations from the US? William Knox was more than an important American businessman; he was well known to Rusk as a former neighbor (abel, 151-2). He did not seek the audience with Khrushchev and was surprised when summoned to the Kremlin. Khrushchev confirmed to him that he did indeed have missiles in Cuba and further would, if necessary, use them. He also tried to explain the difference between "offensive" and "defensive" as he saw it. But in any event his message to Knox (and promptly delivered by Knox) was hardly the signal of desperation; nor was the "slowing down and changing course" of those Soviet ships nearest Cuba because this was in response to U Thant's request.

This unending self-righteousness, the unceasing straining to represent the American govt top echelon and its policies as invariably right, undeviatingly omniscient and holier than the pope is demeaning to the country; and the fawning, sycophantic, tortured effort to deify the president for his godly calm and understanding, his flawless thinking and planning, his inevitable rightness, in a careful reading is denigrating to him. No man is that wise, that never wrong, that all-seeing, that completely perfect. Schlesinger, perhaps more than Sorensen, succeeds in dehumanizing Kennedy, but he does not make him god.

The above excerpt is one of countless ones scattered throughout the entire opus. One needs only a fair intimacy with the writings of Sorensen and Schlesinger to clearly understand that, in defense of an untenable position, Schlesinger is manufacturing fact by language, twisting by paraphrasing, distorting by omission, and indulging in most of the intellectually dishonest tricks of skilled practitioners of prostituted prose.

Note on the misrepresentation of Frost's misinterpretation of a comment made him by Khrushchev, referred to here by Harriman, by Abel on p.36, and by Sorensen on p.669. Schlesinger does correct to this in a lengthy footnote on p.821.

To Schlesinger, Harriman is "the most experienced of all American diplomats". To almost everybody else, he is the outstanding American expert on Russia. But his high school debater's analysis of the situation within the Kremlin in which Khrushchev, rather than in control and executing a preconceived plan, was the creature of the Soviet hawks, was "utterly convincing" (p.822) to Schlesinger:

p.87/21 ... "We must give him an out," Harriman said again. "If we do this shrewdly, we can downgrade the tough group in the Soviet Union which persuaded him to do this. But if we deny him an out, then we will escalate this business into a nuclear war."

Comment: Harriman told Schlesinger the State Dept "never asked my advice about anything outside the Far East. I haven't been in on this at all." What an eloquent commentary on the efficient functioning of Kennedy's executives! So Schlesinger became the messenger boy for this "most experienced of all American diplomats" and "sent Harriman's views along to the President" who called him the next morning.

At least by inference, Schlesinger in this paragraph attributes weight in the President's decision to Harriman's observations. This was reflected in the Pres's Thursday (Oct 25) reply to U Thant in which in Schlesinger's words he "authorized Stevenson to continue discussions". Of this Schlesinger says it "was a second vital decision".

On Thurs "half the Soviet ships ... had put about and were heading home." The "third vital decision" was to permit a tanker which as Schlesinger put it "had identified itself and thereby established a quarantine" to pass thru. (P.822). Then "for the first time all that long week Soviet diplomatic behavior across the world ... indicated that Moscow had at last sent put instructions." Again it would seem that Schlesinger finds some significance - and it is a very obvious thing - in the apparent complete lack of any Soviet diplomatic ~~xxxxxx~~ preparation for the crisis. It could mean only that the very highest echelon of the Soviet govt had elected not to inform its diplomats what was about to happen. Such a thing is virtually unparalleled in history. And despite the excess of American preoccupation from Berlin which did not originate with the missile crisis, Schlesinger points out that "the Russians appeared to be engaged in a studied effort to disassociate Berlin from Cuba".

He finds "the essence of the emerging pattern seems to be concern for a peaceful settlement" and the statements of the Soviet ambassadors in London and Bonn were saying this.

To strengthen the case, Schlesinger dredges up the activity of Capt Ivanov (the Christine Keeler case) and Stephen Ward in Britain, ignoring the previous paragraph and previous references to the total unpreparedness of the highest in the Soviet diplomacy. The Ivanov activity, trying to inspire British requests for a summit meeting, would seem to have been a spontaneous amateur effort. If not, it could only have been a diversion of some sort.

But there was no Soviet backdown for "despite these gestures ... work continued on the sites ..." (p.823)

Then Schlesinger goes into Stevenson's prosecuting attorney treatment of Zorin at the UN, of which he says it "dealt a final blow to the Soviet case before world opinion". Hardly a fact. (p.824)

2. The Letters (pp.824-30)

Comment: That crystal ball again: "And in Moscow there must have been deep anxiety and bitter debate." Any place in the world there was anxiety, at least where rational men lived. But "bitter debate"? What evidence?

The fiction continues: "Khrushchev had now evidently abandoned the effort to bring in more nuclear weapons." But those around him "were apparently determined to make the missiles already there operational as speedily as possible." As Schlesinger very well knew, Khrushchev stated to Kennedy all the intended missiles were in Cuba and, in the context of O'Thant's suggestion, inspection of the ships would show none on them. So again, as so often before, Schlesinger is indulging in juvenile fiction. He concludes the paragraph with another: "... once the missiles were on launching pads, Moscow might be able to drive a better bargain." Just as he has cited no evidence of any conflict between Khrushchev and "some of the men around him", so can he not cite any "better bargain" Moscow could have gotten than it did get.

Of Khrushchev Schlesinger next says, "He knew by now that this essential gamble had failed."

This additional fiction Schlesinger justifies with the bland assumption of intentions on the part of the Soviets that they never had, such as a "strike at Berlin". He implies they thought Americans would not fight. There is no evidence that either of these things is true, and all the evidence is to the contrary.

But significantly Schlesinger quotes Khrushchev as having told the Supreme Soviet in December that "on the morning of October 27 we received information that the invasion would be carried out in the next two or three days." This Khrushchev said would have given a choice between using the rockets or abandoning Cuba. Schlesinger's interpretation is "it was now beyond the realm of tactical maneuver: all roads led to the abyss."

With the text of Khrushchev's Dec 12, 1962, statement to the Supreme Soviet in his hand, a more honest man than Schlesinger would have quoted (as Abel does on p. 214) Khrushchev's statement that "Cuba and the Soviet Union received satisfaction" because "the American invasion of Cuba (not the one during the missile crisis but the one that precipitated it) has been averted" and in this same paragraph Khrushchev cites the "concession" he made to the US: "We withdrew ballistic rockets and agreed to withdraw the IL-28 planes." This "satisfaction" that he gave the Americans really was the only purpose for introducing the missiles.

The "immediate action" that Schlesinger quotes from Khrushchev's speech to the Supreme Soviet "was to prevent an

invasion of Cuba" on approximately the 28th or 29th of Oct 1962.

Now with this misrepresentation, not at all a large one for Schlesinger, he goes into the John Scali story with not less than his usual supply of histrionics and dramatics. (p.825) Essentially he tells the same story as do Sorensen (p.712) and Abel (pp.175-7). Sorensen barely mentions it in less than half of a paragraph from which none of the important or specific contents of the ~~composition~~ proposition made by Fomin is made clear. Schlesinger, who devotes only a paragraph to the Scali-Fomin meeting, nonetheless reports what neither of the others do - not only the proposal, the third part of which was the US guarantee of no invasion of Cuba, but a specific question about it in the course of their meeting in which Fomin asked of Scali, knowing full well that what he was doing was asking it of the Pres of the US, "Would the President of the United States be willing to promise publicly not to invade Cuba?" Schlesinger says that, "When Scali said he did not know, Fomin begged him to find out immediately from his State Department friends. Then, reaching for a pencil, he wrote down his home telephone number: 'If I'm not at the Embassy, call me here. This is of vital importance.'" (p.826)

In the next paragraph Schlesinger reports Scali's answer from Rusk, of which Schlesinger quotes only "that we saw {real possibilities}". This happened at 7:30 P.M. evening. Actually, Scali had in his possession, according to Abel, and repeated "word for word" a handwritten message from Rusk of which Schlesinger must have been aware for he said Fomin "satisfied himself about the authenticity of Scali's message". Once this happened, Fomin "rose and, in his haste to get the word back, tossed down a five-dollar bill for a thirty-cent check and speeded off without waiting for the change."

Schlesinger is alone in reporting this as he was in the bit about Fomin giving Scali his home number. Next Schlesinger goes into the Khrushchev letter. Of this Sorensen (p.712) said only that it arrived in the evening and is careful to avoid a time relationship that has meaning between it and Scali's reply to Fomin. Abel says (p.177) that the message started coming in on the teletype "at 6 p.m.". Schlesinger says, "two hours later", meaning at 9:30 p.m., Khrushchev's letter "began to come in by cable".

Schlesinger devotes most of the next two paragraphs to his version of this letter:

pp.826/7 Two hours later a long letter from Khrushchev to the President began to come in by cable. The Soviet leader started by insisting that the weapons shipments were complete and that their purpose was defensive. Then he declared his profound longing for peace; let us, he said with evident emotion, not permit this situation to get out of hand. The enforcement of the quarantine would only drive the Soviet Union to take necessary measures of its own. But if the United States would give assurances that it would not invade Cuba nor permit others to do so and if it would recall its fleet from the quarantine, this would immediately change everything. Then the necessity for a Soviet presence in Cuba would disappear. The crisis, Khrushchev said, was like a rope with a knot in the middle; the more each side pulled, the more the knot would tighten, until finally it could be severed only by a sword. But if each

side slackened the rope, the knot could be untied.

The letter was not, as subsequently described, hysterical. Though it pulsed with a passion to avoid nuclear war and gave the impression of having been written in deep emotion, why not? In general, it displayed an entirely rational understanding of the implications of the crisis. Together with the Scali proposal, it promised ~~light~~ light at the end of the cave. And in New York on Friday we heard ~~that~~ that Zorin had advanced the same proposal to U Thant, and that the Cubans at the UN were beginning to hint to unaligned delegates that the bases might be dismantled and removed if the United States would guarantee the territorial integrity of Cuba/ The President probably had his first good night's sleep for ten days; certainly the rest of us did.

Comment: Of course, with the full text of the letter never having been made public and Abel having had it leaked to him with only part of it in quotation, it is not possible to completely analyze Schlesinger's version. Some things, however, are clear:

Schlesinger cites no evidence - not even a legitimate suspicion - that "the weapons shipments" were not complete, and having already addressed himself to the question by means of propaganda, ignores Khrushchev's statement "that their purpose was defensive" as Schlesinger ~~paraphrased~~ paraphrased it.

It is certain that Khrushchev never referred to the blockade with the propaganda device invented by the White House, State Dept, Dept of Justice and assorted other advisers: "quarantine". He called it an act of piracy.

Abel devotes 4 pages (p.178-82) to a discussion of paraphrasing of and quotation from this letter. Without Abel's version to refer to, it would be certain that the language used by Schlesinger, that the Soviet Union would "take necessary measures of its own" in opposition to enforcement of the blockade, is a tremendous understatement. With respect to any interference with the Soviet ships, Khrushchev said he would defend them (A-179) and in Abel's paraphrase, he declared "where this would lead, no man could say." Of the resulting war, Khrushchev said, "war in modern conditions would be a world war, a catastrophe for mankind." (A-180).

The part about the knot Abel quotes directly and again it was Khrushchev's emphasis that the pursuance of the American blockade would lead to a nuclear war. At this point - and not at the only point in the letter - Khrushchev spoke with rare severity to the head of another state. He may fairly be said 6666666 to have made accusations against Kennedy: "

(A-181) "If you have not lost your self-control, and sensibly conceive what this might lead to," the Khrushchev letter concluded, "then, Mr. President, we and you ought not now to pull on the ends of the rope in which you (emphasis added) have tied the knot of war, because the more we ~~pull~~ pull, the ~~tighter~~ tighter the knot will be tied. And a moment may come when the knot will be tied so tight that even he who tied it will not have the strength to untie it, and then it will be necessary to cut that knot; and what that would mean is not for me to explain to you, because you yourself understand perfectly of what terrible forces ~~are~~ our countries dispose.

"Consequently, if there is no intention to tighten that knot and thereby doom the world to the catastrophe of thermonuclear war, then

let us take measures to untie that knot. We are ready for this."

Comment: (Nor is this the only place in the letter that Khrushchev addressed language of untoward severity between chiefs of state to the young Pres. He referred to their Vienna meeting and said that, in effect, Kennedy had deceived him in assuring Khrushchev that the Bay of Pigs had been a mistake, an explanation that Khrushchev accepted, the implication being it would not be repeated. (A-180)

Schlesinger is quite correct in saying a) that the letter was not, and b) was subsequently described as, hysterical. The language in which Abel describes it is, "long, argumentative, showing unmistakable signs of alarm ..." (A-177) "... long sections that could ~~mb~~ have been deleted with no loss of meaning ..." (A-178) "somewhat confused" (A-182). Abel also quotes Dean Acheson as saying Khrushchev "must have been 'either tight or scared'" (A-182).

Where Schlesinger says that "together with the Scali proposal" it seemed to propose a solution, he is indulging the official administration line, the purpose of which it is to hide the stupidity (or worse) of the State Dept and other ExCom people for not correctly reading the intent of the letter. The official line is that it gave no promise to remove the missiles. The fact is that Khrushchev, in the language of diplomacy, went even farther, saying that upon receipt of a no-invasion pledge, "... then Castro would demobilize his forces." (A-180) In this context Khrushchev did as he had to do, make clear that, again in Abel's words, "he had no mandate to speak for Fidel Castro but he had reason to believe that ..." This was the strongest possible language permitted by diplomacy for first he had no control over Castro as subsequent events showed, and second, he couldn't even pretend to have any control. So even without the earlier Scali proposal, this was a self-contained solution acceptable, as events showed, to the US. As an analyst and as a historian, as a man skilled in the processes of govt at all levels, and from his previous intelligence experience, Schlesinger should have had no trouble putting the Fomin-Scali contact in proper perspective: A prelude, an introduction, to the coming letter, to give the US a chance to consider its essentials before receipt of the entire text. As events were immediately to show, this misreading, if that is in fact what it was, forced Khrushchev to take a more direct path.

What follows in Schlesinger's inadequate summary of the letter actually should have been at the beginning because it too was prelude. It was earlier that day "that Zorin had advanced the same proposal to U Thant," and earlier that same day "that the Cubans at the UN were beginning to hint ... that the bases might be dismantled and removed if the United States would guarantee the territorial integrity of Cuba." And this, of course, is exactly what happened. All the obfuscation is attributable to the US govt. Analysis of what really happened at the UN showed the solution was available from the very beginning and that only the refusal of the Pres prevented Stevenson from offering the proposal as his initial one, which is to a large degree Khrushchev's proposal (see UN notes).

It would never be gathered from a reading of this Khrushchev-Schlesinger or Abel text that the Pres did not have a

monopoly on a firm grasp of the incalculable potentialities of his action. Khrushchev, who had precipitated them, was at least as thoroly seized by the impending horror. Like all the other apologists for the administration's blunders and policies, Schlesinger seeks to excuse them ~~with~~ which demands of him, as of all the others, a misrepresentation of Khrushchev's subsequent communication. He speaks of this in his very next sentence:

p.827

But when the Executive Committee assembled on Saturday morning, prospects suddenly darkened. The Moscow radio began to broadcast a new Khrushchev letter containing, to everyone's consternation, an entirely different proposition from the one transmitted through Scali and embodied in Khrushchev's letter of the night before. The Soviet Union now said it would remove its missiles from Cuba and offer a non-aggression ~~and~~ pledge to Turkey if the United States would remove its missiles from Turkey and offer a non-aggression pledge to Cuba. The notion of trading the Cuban and Turkish bases had been much discussed in England; Walter Lippmann and others had urged it in the United States. But Kennedy regarded the idea as unacceptable, and the swap was promptly rejected. This proposal was perplexing enough; but, far more alarming, word soon came that a U-2 was missing over Cuba, presumably shot down by the Russians ... American planes had thus far flown over the missile sites without interference. The Soviet action now, some felt, could only mean one thing: that the confrontation was entering its military phase. The bases were becoming operational, and the Russians were evidently determined to use force to maintain them. We had no choice, it was argued, but a military response; and our tactical analysis had already shown that strikes at the bases would be little use without strikes at the airfields, and strikes at the airfields of little use without further supporting action, so, once the process began, it could hardly stop short of invasion.

Comment: First, the offer of a non-aggression pledge to Turkey is omitted from both the Sorensen (p.712) and Abel (p.186-7) versions of this letter. Second, it was not Kennedy but Khrushchev who was permitting no dawdling. This was, in fact, a very tough letter. Making it public made it even tougher because everybody knew about it - the entire world - as fast as Kennedy did. Khrushchev preempted him. So while it was "an entirely different proposition", it was the same kind, only very tough, not at all conciliatory, and to everybody except the US administration, a very reasonable proposal. But it was one which Khrushchev knew Kennedy would not accept because, had it been acceptable, Kennedy would have voluntarily before this seen to the removal of the missiles from Turkey.

Schlesinger studiously avoids reflection of the severity of the letter as, for example, when saying, "if the United States would remove its missiles from Turkey" etc. Sorensen (p.712) says of this "the Jupiter missiles in Turkey must be removed."

Where properly Schlesinger says "the confrontation was entering its military phase", what he fails to say is that Khrushchev was giving Kennedy the choice of accepting either his first or his second (unacceptable) proposal or of nuclear war. It was not entering its military phase from any timidity on the Soviet part. They were forcing it/there. This dishonestly misrepresented letter was Khrushchev's eyeball against

Kennedy's, not vice versa.

While it is not a misreading to say "the Russians were evidently determined to use force", it is a misreading to say that their determination to use force was "to maintain" the bases. Their threat of force, which was so clear, was an alternative to an acceptable and immediate solution.

Again Schlesinger goes out of his way to protect those entirely unworthy advisers to the Pres whose entire motivation is questionable ~~or~~ for had he not he would have had to enlarge upon the "tactical analysis" and to the advice that "we had no choice ... but a military response" which, of course, meant a thermonuclear holocaust. Because it cannot be believed that the incompetence in the State Dept or among the advisers was so great that Khrushchev's letters were not understood, it must then be asked, Why, in the face of a completely acceptable solution, there continued to be talk of launching a war.

Consistent with this necessity is Schlesinger's handling of the shooting-down of the U-2 plane which is not only separated from its true meaning which was obvious, but in turn requires a misrepresentation of what follows in terms of what Kennedy's reaction and justification were for Kennedy did not react to the shooting down of the U-2 and the loss of the American life involved. To divert attention from the meaning of the Russian - for there was no evidence the Cubans had anything to do with the SAMs - shooting-down of the U-2, Schlesinger goes into a diversion omitted from the above-quoted excerpt in which he says the plane had been "piloted, indeed, by the brave South Carolinian, Major Rudolph Anderson, Jr., who had first photographed the installations on October 14." This bit of human interest is the means by which Schlesinger avoids noting the timing of the shooting-down of this plane. U-2a had been flying over Cuba like water over Niagara without molestation. Only after Kennedy had failed to accept Khrushchev's offer, first made with great speed by the indirect Fomin-Scali, out-of-channels contact, and second, repeated Khrushchev's formal letter and coinciding with the tough letter to which it served as an additional ~~explanation~~ ~~point~~ ~~exclamation~~ point. The Khrushchev order his own demonstration of just how tough he was prepared to be. The SAM that shot down Major Anderson told Kennedy loud and clear "this is it. Take it or leave it - now!" (p.827)

The US and Pres Kennedy accepted the shooting-down of the U-2. Schlesinger says,

p.827

The President declined to be stampeded. Obviously, if they shot down U-2s, we would have to react - but not necessarily at once. Again he insisted that the Russians be given time to consider what they were doing before action and counteraction became irrevocable.

Comment: It is true that the President would have to react. But his failure to react immediately in the face of all of his tough talk, all of his threats, in the face of his institution of the blockade, was a clear signal to Khrushchev that Kennedy had at long last recognized the potentiality of the danger point - really the flash point - of the explosive situation. In the context of this situation, consistency on Kennedy's part calls for an immediate reaction. Normality called for an immediate

verbal reaction at least. Schlesinger avoids this, instead shifting the subject back to the letter:

P.828 There remained the Khrushchev letters, and the Executive Committee turned to them again with bafflement and something close to despair. It was noted that Defense Minister Rodion Malinovsky had mentioned Cuba and Turkey together as early as Tuesday, and that Red Star, the army paper, had coupled them again on Friday. Could the military have taken over in Moscow? Rusk called in Scali and asked him to find out anything he could from his Soviet contact. Scali, fearful that he had been used to deceive his own country, ~~apbraided~~ Fomin, accusing him of a double cross. The Russian said miserably that there must have been a cable delay, that the Embassy was waiting word from Khrushchev at any moment. Scali brought this report immediately to the President and the Executive Committee at the White House (where Pierre Salinger nearly had heart failure when, in the midst of the rigorous security precautions of the week, he suddenly saw the ABC reporter sitting at the door of the President's inner office).

Comment: These conjectures are, of course, valid but they are not the central point. They are really evasions. Interestingly enough, however, Schlesinger is alone in reporting this Scali-Fomin interview (or in pointing out that previous informal American contacts had been from the Atty Gen going to Ambassador Dobrynin). Sorensen deals with this period on pp.713-4 without reference to the Scali mission. Abel's commentary on the reaction to the public Khrushchev letter is lengthy and begins on p.188. He also dwells at length on an important item both Schlesinger and Sorensen choose to ignore, the President's reaction to the continued presence of American missiles in Turkey which he had wanted to remove immediately upon his inauguration! (~~xxxx~~ A-189-92) That both Schlesinger and Sorensen ignore it is a further reflection of their self-appointed roles of apologists for their associates and their hero. Despite the picture they paint in such bold strokes and radiant colors of Kennedy "on top" of everything, here was a war-and-peace, life-and-death issue that he did not stay "on top" of. Elsewhere, Schlesinger concedes (see earlier notes) these missiles really served no essential function in Turkey. He does not discuss them in context.

Sorensen's text is equally devoid of any indication of the dire meaning of the timing of the shooting down of Major Anderson's U-2 (p.713), also reports conjecture about whether "Khrushchev's hardliners" had "once again taken the lead" (p.712).

And, of course, Fomin's lack of information from Moscow was a further evidence that all three writers should have found a significant documentation of the crucial ~~central~~ fact that Khrushchev himself was staying in personal control of everything and letting nothing go to anybody that did not serve the central purpose he had in mind.

The accident (and despite its extremely unusual timing and coincidence, there is no evidence that it was an effort by the military to precipitate a response by the Soviet Union, altho all of the reporting of the deliberations of the ExCom reflect a strong ambition on the part of the military to start a war) that Schlesinger next discusses (as also does Sorensen on p.713), if nothing else, was an unheeded warning of the extreme

hazard of their freedom the American aviation took with the world's airspace;

p.828

In the meantime a new crisis: another U-2 on a routine air-sampling mission from Alaska to the North Pole had gone off course and was over the Soviet Union; it had already attracted the attention of Soviet fighters and was radioing Alaska for help. Would the Russians view this as a final reconnaissance in preparation for nuclear attack? What if they decided to strike first? Roger Hilsman brought the frightening news to the President. There was a moment of absolute grimness. Then Kennedy, with a brief laugh, said, "There is always some so-and-so who doesn't get the word."

Comment: Schlesinger's childish conjecture of this failure of Soviet response is that perhaps Khrushchey read this as he undoubtedly had the mobilization so strong in Florida of Kennedy's determination. The fact that Schlesinger carefully and again with contemptuous dishonesty suppresses, Abel deals with at several points. First it should be noted that the shooting-down of the U-2 was not an isolated incident Schlesinger pretends, but that "two more reconnaissance planes had drawn antiaircraft fire as they swooped low over the missile sites that morning" (A-196). Next (A-193) Abel says, "The President, who had issued careful instructions against provocative flights of this sort, was moved to ironic laughter." At this point (at the top of p.194) Abel makes clear Khrushchey's interpretation was anything but Schlesinger's snide imputation for he wrote the Pres immediately "What is this, a provocation? One of your planes violates our frontier during this anxious time we are both experiencing, when everything has been put into combat readiness. Is it not a fact that an intruding American plane could be easily taken for a nuclear bomber, which might push us to a fateful step?" (A-194)

So it is clear that Khrushchey was the man of restraint and Khrushchey was the man of iron nerve in not starting an atomic war in retaliation or in even shooting down the intruder which, based on the Major Anderson U-2 experience, he knew he could safely do.

But an honest analysis and a thorough presentation (certainly not prohibited by space considerations in a book of 1100 pages) would not have permitted the deification of Kennedy any more than it would have permitted the indulgence of Schlesinger's own political likes and dislikes, and the fostering of his political beliefs.

Here he switches to glorification of the other Kennedy, the Atty Gen, who he says "now came up with a thought of breath-taking simplicity and ingenuity: why not ignore the second Khrushchey message and reply to the first?" (p.828) Again, only because he is protecting people whose deficiencies should be known to the entire country is it necessary for Schlesinger to do this. But had he not, this only too obvious and unmistakable response to Khrushchey's intentions would of necessity have had to have been analyzed as the failure of those in the American govt, both immediately around the Pres and in the State Dept, to do either what the national interest demanded or what the norm of their own callings dictated. Only the failures of Fri night created the situation of Sat. And only a real or pretended misunderstanding of Khrushchey's public letter created the "crisis."

Schlesinger, like everyone else, ignores the failure of anyone in the administration to signal even the remotest interest in Khrushchev's letter. Khrushchev's response to Fomin had been evasive. All that Khrushchev's Fri Night letter required, all that Fomin's informal proposal needed, was a very brief, one-paragraph response indicating the general outline of either or both of the communications indicated an acceptable base for a solution to the US. This was missing. This was obvious. This was consistent with Adlai Stevenson's initial proposal at the UN (which neither Sorensen nor Schlesinger sees fit to recall in this context) and because of the urgent need for time, this failure allowed Khrushchev no alternative but to play his already undoubtedly prepared hand with the public letter. So perhaps Robert Kennedy was a genius. But if so, it was only because of the mediocrity with which he was surrounded.

But Schlesinger is faced with the necessity of diverting attention from the failure to give a meaningful answer to either Fomin's informal message or Khrushchev's letter of Fri. He is also faced with the necessity of avoiding the significance of the public and much more severe letter. It is in this context that the false propaganda campaign launched by the administration labeling Khrushchev's letter hysterical, etc., makes sense. While Schlesinger wouldn't buy this particular facet, he took the administration's jewel and polished it.

The elaborate construction is this: Khrushchev's letter is the letter of Fri. It is emotional, it is human, it is forceful, and it is couched in the kind of language the Soviet chairman would have used. More, altho Schlesinger is not alone in avoiding it, - Sorensen does too - the letter was larded with Khrushchev's personal experiences and homilies about what he had learned from them. There was no question about it, this was Khrushchev's own letter.

But the Sat letter had a different tone. It was not a personal letter; it was a formal document. From this Schlesinger and the others wanted to believe that he had nothing to do with it. Schlesinger says, "Its institutional tone suggests that it was written in the Foreign Office." Where in the hell else should it have been written? This is the normal source of communications between states and between heads of states. The personal letter from Khrushchev was an exception. It was a proper exception. It is possible something insidious can be read into his having drafted the letter himself rather than allowing his Foreign Office bureaucrats to do so. But can anything insidious be read into Kennedy's regular editing of State Dept drafts, of his having Sorensen and other members of his staff draft papers for him? Schlesinger was one of these people and he certainly knew the processes of govt. From this moonshine he distills the following: "Might it (the second letter) not have been drafted in Moscow on Thursday and Friday with an eye

p.829

to Saturday morning release in New York? Then the so-called first letter, which reflected the movement of events well beyond the U Thant proposal and which was clearly written by Khrushchev himself, may well have been composed late Friday night (Moscow time) and transmitted immediately to Kennedy while the 'second' letter was deep in the bureaucratic pipelines. Knowing heads of state and foreign office bureaucracies, one could take anything as possible."

Note: Thus, like all his associates, and numerous fellow apologists, Schlesinger evades the clear import of the second Khrushchev letter with a similar but different distillation of nothingness.

With the reader's mind suitably distracted from the failure of Kennedy, the State Dept or any advisers to counsel him to answer Khrushchev's Friday letter and entirely ignored the inadequate response from Rusk to Fomin, he quotes from Kennedy's Oct 27 response to Khrushchev: "At any rate, on October 27 Kennedy now wrote Khrushchev, 'I have read your letter of October 26th with great care and welcomed the statement of your desire to seek a prompt solution.'"

The obvious question he has avoided is: Why couldn't his response have gone out immediately? Settlement could have been sooner, more pleasant, more dignified, at least historically for Kennedy, and the world would have teetered a day less.

Schlesinger does not date Kennedy's reply, but Abel (187) puts it at 8:05 p.m. and Sorensen (714) "shortly after 8 p.m."

But of course this is not all that Schlesinger left out. He very carefully shelters the reputation of Dean Acheson whose participation in these deliberations was something less than helpful, something more than warlike, and anything but a credit to the reputation that somehow or another he had attached to himself or to the reputation of the country. And he has omitted the infantile agonizing of the ExCom so used to little-boy tricks of maneuvering and so dependent upon being able to accomplish the normal ends of diplomacy only by the presence of overwhelming power to support them, that they dreamed up such incredible maneuvers as 1), to quote Abel, "by which the Turkish Government would somehow be persuaded to petition the United States for their (the missiles) removal". Or, again, quoting from Abel, "The Executive Committee agreed (my emphasis) that the United States could afford to pay a considerable price in subsequent negotiations if the Russians would stop their Cuba missile build-up at once, before the IREMs became operational. This concession was to be disguised as part of a broader negotiation with the Russians concerning relaxation of tensions between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Accordingly, the President talked privately with Rusk and McNamara at the close of the morning session and then assigned Gilpatric to spend the afternoon in Bundy's basement office at the White House, with representatives of the State Department and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, writing a 'scenario' for the early removal of all Jupiter missiles from Turkey and Italy. There were to be two separate plans in view of the differing national circumstances as between Turks and Italians. Gilpatric's scenario was to be ready for the Executive Committee's third meeting of the day at 9 p.m." (A-194-5). Unlike Schlesinger and Sorensen, yet with the same beliefs and attitude, Abel devotes a very lengthy section beginning on p.186.

So do we have a picture of the fearless young President, tall in the full 20 feet to which Schlesinger has drawn him, erect, unbending, unflinching, Dick Daring in the White House, Horatio at the bridge, and valiant, courageous, derring-do advisers all, undaunted, heroic Hairbreadth Harries of the diplomatic and military services? Or do we have frightened little boys with their heads under the pillows, under the sheets and shivering in fear? They were so deep in their dismay that among the entire crew there wasn't a single unhidden eyeball

to press against Khrushchev's. Schlesinger has few words for this very important letter written by the President. He devotes part of a short paragraph to it, half of which he spends in the fruitless chase of a wild goose. Nowhere in it does one find a reflection of the fact that Kennedy grabbed Khrushchev's proposal. You will find that Kennedy condescendingly indicated that once he got what he wanted "he would be ready to negotiate a settlement along the lines Khrushchev had proposed" (which is not what happened). What Kennedy told Khrushchev was that, as he understood Khrushchev's proposal, it was acceptable (A-198) (S-715). For all his dedication to fact, the mortar that binds the structure of history, Schlesinger in 1100 pages is so pressed for space he cannot find the room to acknowledge that Kennedy agreed "to give assurances against an invasion of Cuba" and he went father and in diplomatic language insured Cuba against invasion from any other nation in the hemisphere, "I am confident that other nations in the western hemisphere would be prepared to do likewise".

But in a way Schlesinger's solution of the problem he faced was a little bit cleaner than Sorensen's. Sorensen prints almost all of Kennedy's letter. What little he didn't print cannot be justified as omitted for reasons of space for his, like Schlesinger's, is a massive tome. He omitted the first sentence of the President's letter, which politely credited Khrushchev with the initiation. Then he left out a "however" and a "but" which tended to make Kennedy's letter stronger than it was. And he left out other things where he didn't indicate omissions, such as the guarantee against an invasion of Cuba from any hemisphere nation. With more subtlety than honesty, he replaced this with a note of his own, a note that, in the light of the history already written long before Sorensen/forget his book, was dishonest - not because the things he said were wrong, but because they hadn't come to pass. The guarantee against hemisphere invasion was replaced by this note: "Note that, unlike the action to be undertaken by Khrushchev, ours was conditional upon UN arrangements." (S-715) Perhaps Mr. Sorensen wanted to indicate he had omitted more of the letter than he really did because the last paragraph (S-715) has two omissions indicated. The first is the word "but" which takes up no more space in type than the dots indicating its omission; and in the same line, he left out nothing and put in the dots indicating the elision! Unwilling to credit Khrushchev with the solution, as Kennedy honestly did, without indicating the omission, Sorensen left out the last sentence in Kennedy's letter, which read, "For this reason, I hope we can quickly agree along the lines outlined in this letter and in your letter of October 26th." Clearly, it was not considerations of space that motivated Sorensen's editing of Kennedy's letter (of which he was co-author). It is just that Sorensen found the end so bitter; or perhaps what he left out were the changes, the additions the President made in his draft?

Having omitted the first sentence, where again the President credited Khrushchev with the proposal that ended the crisis, Sorensen could not abide the second where Kennedy backed down on the "offensive" propaganda device he had used, shifting to a description of "weapons systems in Cuba capable of offensive use". The note that Sorensen adds here explaining away Kennedy's

retreat on "offensive" as "instead of arguing with Mr. K. over whether his missiles and planes were intended to be offensive", Sorensen devotes more than 10 percent of the quotation of this letter to this note alone.

Abel printed the entire text (A-197-9) which in his book that is ever so much smaller than either Schlesinger's or Sorensen's with fewer lines to the page, more leading between the lines, and lines that are a lot shorter, occupies considerably less than 2 pages. Had Sorensen omitted his own interpolations, he could have printed the entire letter in the same space.

But the spark of the historian that he once had been perhaps still glowed in Schlesinger's breast. He did find room to quote a sentence ~~that~~ - a single sentence - from the letter. It read, "If your letter signifies that you are prepared to discuss a detente affecting NATO and the Warsaw Pact, we are quite prepared to consider with our allies any useful proposals." If His intention had been to pick a single sentence most unrelated to the crisis and its solution, he could have succeeded no better! And with this sentence, Schlesinger is finished with Kennedy's letter! It is a really clever performance - just as clever as his quoting at the beginning of the paragraph the single opening sentence that Sorensen had seen fit to omit because, removed from the rest of the letter, it advanced the fiction that Kennedy solved the crisis for it said that Kennedy "welcomed the statement of your desire to seek a prompt solution", making it look as tho Khrushchev had in some way backed down.

But Schlesinger is not finished with his novelist approach to history. His next paragraph begins,

p.829

And so the message shot inscrutably into the night. Robert Kennedy carried a copy that evening to the Soviet Ambassador, saying grimly that, unless we received assurances in twenty-four hours, the United States would take military action by Tuesday."

Comment: Sorensen, too, follows his reference to the letter with the same window dressing:

At the private request of the President, a copy of the letter was delivered to the Soviet Ambassador by Robert Kennedy with a strong verbal message: The point of escalation was at hand; the United States could proceed toward peace and disarmament, or, as the Attorney General later described it, we could take "strong and overwhelming retaliatory action . . . unless the President/ received immediate notice that the missiles would be withdrawn." (S-715)

Comment: Abel's version, at the end of his quotation of the full text of the letter (a-199) is,

To be absolutely certain that Khrushchev fully understood the grave warning embedded in the final paragraph, Robert Kennedy delivered a copy of the President's letter to Ambassador Dobrynin at the Soviet Embassy on 16th Street. Kennedy emphasized to the Ambassador that time was running out. He said the United States was ready to begin military action by the first of the week.

Comment: This "final paragraph" is stronger in the Schlesinger version of history, where it doesn't exist, or in Sorensen's where it is edited, than in the full text (A-198-9) (and here the signifi-

cance of the omitted "but" in Sorensen's version becomes clear. Kennedy emphasized that "the first ingredient" was "the cessation of work on missile sites in Cuba and measures to render such weapons inoperable . . . The continuation of this threat, or a prolonging of this discussion concerning Cuba by linking these problems to the broader questions of European and world security, would surely lead to an intensification of the Cuban crisis and a grave risk to the peace of the world."

The next and concluding sentence is the one in which he conceded he was accepting Khrushchev's offer of the 26th, already quoted.

Now, this language, interpreted as "tough talk" by the administration's apologists, bears no relationship to the letter it was answering, that of the 26th. All it does is beg off from the tough letter of the 27th. For it was only in the letter of the 27th that Khrushchev had raised the question of the missiles in Turkey. That is what Kennedy was addressing himself to and in no sense was he "tough".

Nor was Kennedy or the administration being "tough" in sending a copy of the letter to the Soviet Ambassador by means of the Atty Gen, the President's brother. It was only one of the many means by which the administration sought the greatest possible speed and the greatest ~~maximum~~ attention to the President's acceptance of Khrushchev's proposal. As Abel makes clear (A-197), before the Atty Gen left the White House and "at the same time" that the letter was dispatched to Khrushchev, at 8:05 p.m., "Salinger handed copies to the White House reporters."

But Schlesinger's romance is far from ended: "no one knew whether Khrushchev was even still in power." (!!!!) He next quotes the Atty Gen, in apparent reference to the ExCom and the Pres as follows: "We all agreed in the end that if the Russians were ready to go to nuclear war over Cuba, they were ready to go to nuclear war, and that was that. So we might as well have the showdown then as six months later." (829-30)

The window is dressed but it is still barren. Was there any reason for any rational, reasonable, passably honest man to believe that, when the Pres had completely accepted Khrushchev's proposition, the Russians would use that as an excuse to go to nuclear war over Cuba?

In any event, Schlesinger said "Saturday night was almost the blackest of all." And the ExCom prepared to "face the most terrible decisions".

But fear not, dear reader. As the sun rose the cavalry came charging over the hill. Flags waving, sabres flashing, our brave boys had done it!

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Sunday, October 28, was a shining autumn day. At nine in the morning Khrushchev's answer began to come in. By the fifth sentence it was clear that he had thrown in his hand. ~~Waxx~~

Comment: Khrushchev had "thrown in his hand"? Kennedy had grabbed his ~~the~~ deal so fast . . . and his deal and Khrushchev threw in his hand? Kennedy had guaranteed not to invade Cuba and Khrushchev lost? He had guaranteed Cuba against invasion from other Latin American countries (which meant, of course, a disguised American invasion) and Khrushchev lost?