The PRESIDENTIAL RECORDINGS

JOHN F. KENNEDY

THE GREAT CRISES, VOLUME TWO

SEPTEMBER–OCTOBER 21, 1962

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Tuesday, September 4, 1962

The President's Labor Day holiday in Newport, Rhode Island, ended abruptly. A U.S. spy plane had just accidentally strayed over Soviet territory in violation of international law and the President's 1961 pledge to maintain a moratorium on reconnaissance flights in Soviet airspace. Briefed first thing that morning in Newport, Kennedy sent instructions for his chief Kremlin-watchers to meet him at the White House once he returned. The stray plane had spent only a few minutes in Soviet airspace, and fortunately Moscow's response was a note and not a salvo of antiaircraft missiles. Nevertheless, with tensions high in U.S.-Soviet relations, President Kennedy wanted to minimize the effect of this incident. He wished to waste no time in responding to the Soviet protest. In Washington, the State Department was drafting that response for the President's approval.

Even before this news arrived from Russia, President Kennedy had planned to devote considerable time on this Tuesday to discussing the Cold War. The week before Labor Day, two Republican congressmen had launched a searing attack on Kennedy's Cuba policy, suggesting that the Soviet military buildup in the Caribbean was designed to make a missile base out of Fidel Castro's island. Senators Kenneth Keating and Bourke Hickenlooper were alleging that the Kennedy administration knew this and was hiding the truth about Soviet activities from the American people. Indeed the administration did know a little bit more about the situation in Cuba than it had announced publicly. On August 29, a CIA U-2 had flown over most of Cuba. The photographs from that flight had revealed eight Soviet surface-to-air missile sites on the western half of the island. These were not the nuclear missiles alleged by the Republican senators. Nonetheless, this was the first time Soviet missiles of any kind had been seen in Cuba. Kennedy had to be concerned that it was only a matter of time before this significant development would be leaked to his opponents.

President Kennedy felt it was time to reassert control of the situation, to take the lead in informing the public of what his experts believed was happening in Cuba. Over the weekend the head of policy planning at the State Department, Walt Rostow, had chaired a team to draft a major press statement for the President. Even before Kennedy's plane arrived at Andrews Air Force Base, word was already going out to the congres-

sional leadership to be prepared for an afternoon White House briefing on the Cuban situation.[1]

11:30–11:50 A.M.

[W]e don't owe him the whole truth . . .

Meeting on U-2 Incident[2]

Since the May 1960 shoot-down of a CIA U-2 spy plane piloted by Francis Gary Powers, use of the U-2 had become a problem for the United States in international politics. In the words of the CIA, there was "universal repugnance, or, at the very least, extreme uneasiness regarding overflights."[3] Hope for a short-term solution of the Berlin problem before Dwight D. Eisenhower left office crashed with Powers's plane. In the United States, candidate John F. Kennedy had joined the chorus of disapproval of Eisenhower's decision to send a U-2 over Soviet territory so close to a planned summit. As a result of the failure of the Powers mission, the White House would never again send a U-2 to fly over the Soviet bloc.[4]

Two years later at a moment of even greater international tension, President John Kennedy faced his own U-2 problem. A U.S. Air Force U-2 had strayed into Soviet territory on Thursday, August 30, but Kennedy apparently only heard about it when the Soviet protest arrived early on September 4.[5] In response, the President gathered his top aides from State and Defense to consider how to mollify the Soviets and to guard

1. Date Diary, 4 September 1962, Richard Russell Papers, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, University of Georgia, Athens.

2. Including President Kennedy, Charles Bohlen, McGeorge Bundy, Martin Hillenbrand, Robert Kennedy, Foy Kohler, Robert McNamara, and Dean Rusk. Tape 18, John F. Kennedy Library, President's Office Files, Presidential Recordings Collection.

3. "U-2 Overflights of Cuba, 29 August through 14 October 1962," 27 February 1963, in *CIA Documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis 1962*, ed. Mary McAuliffe (Washington, DC: CIA, 1992), document 45.

4. Gregory W. Pedlow and Donald E. Welzenbach, *The CIA and the U-2 Program, 1954–1974* (Washington, DC: CIA, 1998), p. 197.

5. After 1958, the U.S. Air Force assumed the responsibility for U-2 reconnaissance flights along the Soviet periphery. This particular flight was under the control of the Strategic Air Command. Like the CIA, the U.S. Air Force was not permitted to send U-2s over Soviet territory after May 1960. Although a resumption of U-2 overflights of Soviet territory was consid-

against yet another U-2 incident. But the U.S. government still needed the intelligence that U-2s could provide. Although satellite reconnaissance was still in its infancy, the successful launch of the SAMOS satellite in the summer of 1961 had taken some but not all of the pressure off the U-2 for information on Soviet military developments. Evidently, the U-2 involved in the 30 August incident had meant to fly parallel to the Soviet borders to pick up electronic intelligence but had lost its way.

Kennedy began taping as Dean Rusk gives his assessment of the situation.

Dean Rusk: It's very clear indeed that the Soviets have got us right on the hip on this one.

President Kennedy: Right.

Rusk: Therefore the [*unclear*] and—

President Kennedy: [*Unclear*] which I [*unclear*]. I saw your wife the other day at the airport.

Charles Bohlen: Yes, sir.

President Kennedy: And I saw Avis's sister, wasn't that . . .?[6] Avis's sister was there right at the airport to welcome me, along with a few others.

Bohlen: Evidently.

President Kennedy: She said she was Avis's sister and three boys, and two boys.

Bohlen: Yeah.

President Kennedy: She must . . . she couldn't have too much to do up there if she went to the airport [*unclear*]. [*A chuckle.*]

Rusk: [*Unclear*] have you been briefed on what actually happened on this?

President Kennedy: Yeah. I wonder how the pilot made the mistake?

Rusk: Well . . . very heavy winds blowing to the west and they just blew him off course. It was at night. Obviously, it could not have been—there—a reconnaissance photographic plane of the sort that the U-2 over a Soviet—

President Kennedy: Oh, it was at night.

---

ered by the Kennedy administration during the 1961 Berlin crisis, no intentional overflights of Soviet territory took place in the Kennedy years (ibid., pp. 189–97, 201).

6. Charles Bohlen had two daughters, Avis and Celestine. Here the President is referring to Celestine Bohlen, who later became a foreign correspondent for the *New York Times.*

Rusk: It was at night.

President Kennedy: Right.

Rusk: But I think the key element here is the basis of candor between you and Mr. Khrushchev on a matter of this sort. Because if he develops all sorts of wide-ranging suspicions of your own credibility then all sorts of other tight things like Berlin, Cuba could be directly affected and, I think, in a very adverse way. So, I would suggest for your consideration that we send a note and make a short statement, consistent with it, saying that it was investigated immediately upon receipt of the Soviet note. The investigation revealed that an unintentional violation may, in fact, have taken place.

"A weather reconnaissance and air-sampling aircraft operated by United States Air Forces in the Northern Pacific was in the area east of Sakhalin at about the time specified in the Soviet note.[7] The pilot of the aircraft has reported that he was flying a directed course well outside Soviet territorial limits, but encountered severe winds during this nighttime flight and may therefore have unintentionally overflown the southern tip of Sakhalin. My government has instructed me," this will be the note, "that the policy of the United States government with respect to overflights of Soviet territory has in no way been altered and remains as stated by the President on January 25, 1961. If the pilot of the aircraft in question did, in fact, violate Soviet territory this act was entirely unintentional and due solely to a navigational error under extremely difficult flying conditions."

Bohlen: May I make [*unclear interjection*] I think you ought to say, "expresses the regret of the United States government."

President Kennedy: The regret thing might bring it back . . . the whole business of '60, where I said that we should have regretted and [former vice president Richard] Nixon always said I apologize[d].[8] I'd just as soon . . . I tried—I'd rather use a phrase here—

Rusk: Well, if you, see if the pil—

President Kennedy: —that suggested . . . which would not put us back in the regretting business.

Rusk: If the pilot of the aircraft in question did, in fact, violate

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7. Sakhalin Island was divided between Japan and Russia until 1945, when the Soviets occupied the southern half of this long island.

8. Kennedy is referring to the politics surrounding the Soviet shoot-down of Gary Powers's U-2 in May 1960. The Eisenhower administration's handling of the crisis became an issue in that year's presidential election.

[Soviet] territory . . . You see it's, leave that open. He may have, you see. But [if he] did in fact violate, this act was entirely unintentional and due solely to a navigational error under extremely difficult flying conditions. That's enough of a regret, I should think, at this point.

Martin Hillenbrand: Sir, may I bring up one point that I think—

President Kennedy: Yeah.

Hillenbrand: —is important to your credibility problem?

Thirty-four seconds excised as classified information.

Robert Kennedy: Can I make that point also that it's almost the direct wording of the note that was issued after the U-2 . . . that first paragraph—

Hillenbrand: My point is that I just wouldn't specify what they're collecting—I would leave it unspecified, but the nighttime will make it clear that it's not a photographic one.

President Kennedy: Well, the other thing, I, you'd have to maybe even explain that . . .

Hillenbrand: I think you could say, "a routine."

Bohlen: Well, but the cause of the violation was the weather, the wind . . .

Unidentified: Right.

Hillenbrand: No doubt—

President Kennedy: The purpose of the flight—

Bohlen: The purpose of the flight was not going to—

Rusk: "A weather reconnaissance and air-sampling aircraft" . . . It undoubtedly did some air sampling, didn't it? Don't all of our flights do some of this?

Unidentified: I'm, you know . . .

Robert McNamara: I don't [*unclear*], the U-2 did.

Unidentified: No, I don't think so.

Rusk: An aircraft on a routine mission—

President Kennedy: Well, I don't know . . . it's . . . I think the . . . we owe him . . . we don't owe him the whole truth [*unclear*]—

McGeorge Bundy: Why don't you just say an aircraft in international waters may have been blown over?

Hillenbrand: That's right. All I'm suggesting is we not say while on an air-sampling mission.

Rusk: Knock out that sentence.

Hillenbrand: I think that this would clearly affect the credibility of [*unclear*].

President Kennedy: Yeah.

Hillenbrand: It is very likely that he would know that it's not.

President Kennedy: Well, would he?

Bundy: Is their charge as I understood it, the first take? [*President Kennedy can be indistinctly heard.*] They have charged a rather higher degree of violation than we believe to have occurred in this matter. They've talked about—

Unidentified: Nine minutes.

Rusk: They've only talked about nine minutes. But that may—

President Kennedy: The point is there's no photography. That's the key to this U-2. Now, if we just say "nighttime," we leave everybody to conclude that it's not. Unless we want to at the time, to put out background that it wasn't a U-2, it was obviously at night, so no photography was involved. That seems to me—that gets away from the U-2 idea.

Bundy: It is a U-2.

President Kennedy: The plane is U-2 but it gets away from—

Bundy: The mission is not to spy in the sky.

President Kennedy: Yeah.

Bundy: Spies, yeah.

President Kennedy: Does he charge it was photography?

Rusk: No, they didn't, sir . . . they didn't say that.

Kohler: Just say, "a U-2 reconnaissance, an American U-2 reconnaissance plane."

President Kennedy: Well, there wasn't reconnaissance in this. Reconnaissance is photographic. How do we get that over?

Is that for you?

Rusk: Well, you get, then—"a weather reconnaissance aircraft operated by the United States Air Force."

President Kennedy: Why don't we call it "a weather reconnaissance plane?"

Kohler: That would be perfectly all right. As long you just don't say, "[*unclear*] on a air-sampling mission," I just . . .

President Kennedy: Right.

Bundy: In international waters.

Rusk: In the Northern Pacific.

Kohler: Yes.

Rusk: It was in the vicinity, it was in the area east of Sakhalin at about the time specified by the Soviet note. It was not on a photographic mission, period. The pilot of the aircraft—

President Kennedy: It was at night. It was at night and not on a photographic mission. You want to say that. We want to just have that backgrounded when we put it out, when we release this note.

Hillenbrand: You just say a weather plane—

President Kennedy: Are we planning to release this note . . . ?

Rusk: We'd convert that part of it into a short statement. Just the part that I . . . the . . .

President Kennedy: But I think [*unclear interjection*] we could in a short statement that we put out, say it wasn't photographic, it took place at night.

Hillenbrand: If you just said "a weather reconnaissance airplane operating at night."

Bohlen: I think that takes . . .

Hillenbrand: That would take care of it.

President Kennedy: OK, but then I think we can—whoever puts this, if State puts it out, the thing to say is it's obviously not U-2 because it was . . . at night. Weather . . .

Bohlen: The only real problem we have in regard to the public statement is where this plane came from. It came from South Korea.

Hillenbrand: This is, this kind of gets us too involved—

Bohlen: And, this is one that we've decided . . . the best thing to do is just say we don't say where it came from—

Hillenbrand: You should deny it came from Japan.

Bohlen: Except [*unclear*] background [*unclear*] on background to say that it's been announced that there's no U-2 operations from Japan. You might have a little trouble with South Korea [*unclear*].

President Kennedy: Can we see, read that again to us now, Mr. Secretary?

Rusk: "A weather reconnaissance aircraft operated by—"

President Kennedy: This should be to Khrushchev? Or who would this be to ?

Rusk: This would be to—

Bohlen: No, this would be a reply to the note. This statement would then [*unclear*] in an oral reply . . .

Rusk: [*mumbling in the background*] This [*unclear*] no question who was [*unclear*] and who was—

President Kennedy: . . . does contain that the United States [*unclear*] . . . [*mumbles as he reads the draft note*] the investigation will be a [*unclear*] to—

Rusk: Right.

President Kennedy: The investigation.

Rusk: [*reading*] "An investigation revealed that an unintentional violation may in fact have taken place. A weather reconnaissance aircraft operated by the United States Air Force in the Northern Pacific, was in the area east of Sakhalin at about the time specified in the Soviet note."

The question [is] whether we specifically say no photography was involved.

Hillenbrand: All right, well, if you put in that phrase there, "operating at night."

President Kennedy: Well, then we're going to background, aren't we? And say that . . . We're going to say that here. We don't say it to the Soviets [*unclear*].

Rusk: [*reading*] "The pilot of the aircraft has reported that he was flying a directed course well outside Soviet territorial limits but encountered severe winds during the nighttime flight and may therefore have unintentionally overflown the southern tip of Sakhalin. My government has instructed me to state that the policy of the United States government with reference to overflights of Soviet territory has in no way been altered and remains as stated by the President on January 25, 1961. [If] the pilot of the aircraft in question did in fact violate Soviet territory, this act was entirely unintentional and due solely to a navigational error under extremely difficult flying conditions."

President Kennedy: Do we want to say "every precaution will be taken to prevent a recurrence"?

Unidentified: Sounds good.

President Kennedy: See that gets in, the regret, then after that . . .

Bohlen: This implies as though you haven't taken [them] before. And, of course, the course of this plane was well outside the—

Bundy: I don't understand how this damn thing happened, I must say.

President Kennedy: I see that every—We are just restating it that every precaution be taken to prevent a recurrence.

Rusk: "Precautions are . . ."

President Kennedy: "Every step will be taken."

Rusk: "Precautions are . . ."

Bohlen: "The existing precautions will be . . ."

Rusk: "Precautions are . . . earlier—"

President Kennedy: "Reexamined in [*unclear*] terms."

Rusk: "—directed earlier—"

Unidentified: "Reconfirmed."

Rusk: "Precautions directed earlier by the President to avoid such incidents remain in full effect."

President Kennedy: But, except, we've had the incident. So, I think we ought to just say, if we are going to say anything, we ought to just say that we're taking every step to prevent a recurrence.

Bundy: Will be reviewed. You could say it will be reviewed. That would suggest that you—

President Kennedy: Prevent a recurrence.

Well, then . . . and then what would we release?

Rusk: I think we might make a statement that in effect is this note, even though we make the statement before the Soviets get the reply.

Bundy: Why do we . . . Why do we—?

Rusk: Make a statement entirely harmonious with—

Bundy: Isn't it better to have the Soviet government get the answer before we make it public that we think there may have been . . .

Bohlen: Well, that means a certain number of hours, almost till tomorrow that we have to wait for the . . .

Bundy: Why are we in such a tremendous hurry?

Rusk: I think we ought to handle the press today.

Bundy: I think maybe we could stonewall today, saying that the matter . . . that the President's instructions are in force and the question will be, the case is being looked into.

President Kennedy: What would be—you know, we can say the matter is being looked into—but what would be the matter of our making this as a public statement now before the Soviets have gotten it?

Bundy: No. I was thinking that the same argument that the Secretary and Chip were making is . . . the critical issue here for the long haul is that we should do nothing that makes Khrushchev think he can't trust you.[9] It seems to me that the more seriously you respond [*unclear*] the response is more seriously from the U.S. government to the Soviet government if they get it first on a private line.

President Kennedy: Did they release theirs before we got it?

Bundy: They [*unclear*].

Bohlen: Yes, they gave Reuters [*unclear*] what we got this morning.

Bundy: Well, they gave it to our man before they gave it, before they released it. But we didn't get it until after they had . . . is that right?

Bohlen: [*Unclear*] afternoon but [*unclear*].

Bundy: Thompson, presum—, had this, you see, as of yesterday. No, as of one P.M. today.

President Kennedy: Well, then we've got two alternatives: one is to put it out now and then put it out an hour after we—

Rusk: Well, you can give it to [Anatoly] Dobrynin and then put it out.[10]

Bundy: Hmm, hmm. That's true, [*unclear*]. Right.

Rusk: You can just send it over to him, send it to him, and then put it out. If it is in their hands at the time we put it out, it's all right.

President Kennedy: Then what would we put out?

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9. Chip is Charles Bohlen.
10. Anatoly Dobrynin was Soviet ambassador to the United States since mid-March 1962.

Rusk: We would put out the text of the note.

Bohlen: Do you want to do it in an oral statement or do you want to make it a formal note?

Bundy: [*to Robert Kennedy*] Well, the question is whether we want to add anything that says, when you see him, you're seeing him . . .

Rusk: Make an oral statement but make the, but make the . . .

Bundy: Bobby happens to be speaking to him at 2:15, is that right?[11]

Rusk: I think we ought to get this to him before you see him, so that you can underline it, reaffirm it in whatever way is necessary.

President Kennedy: OK. We ought to . . . It seems to me that we ought to . . . When Bobby is seeing him . . . we ought to give Bobby some instructions as to what his attitude ought to be on various matters. Dobrynin called you what day?

Robert Kennedy: Saturday.

President Kennedy: And he wanted to see you, he'd like to see you?

Bohlen: You've had a response from [*unclear*]?

Robert Kennedy: No, he wants to see me at 2:15. He said anytime and anyplace. He wants to talk just . . . I don't know what it's about.

Bohlen: Berlin?

President Kennedy: What is it that we ought to have—What is it, Bobby ought to, does anybody have any suggestions about what line he should take?

Rusk: Well, I think that the principal positive thing is this question of the nontransfer of nuclear weapons and I'd [*unclear*] a few minutes with you about that.[12] They have come back to it, so we're moving to kind of pull this together with our allies so that we can go ahead on the nontransfer of nuclear weapons agreement with them. We've said that Mr. [Andrei] Gromyko's reply to mine was constructive and open.[13] I think you ought to take up the nuclear testing with him and point out that—

President Kennedy: We ought to get this atmospheric . . .

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11. Robert Kennedy's 2:15 P.M. meeting with Soviet ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin is confirmed by a note in the Attorney General's appointments diary, John F. Kennedy Library.

12. At the Geneva foreign ministers' meeting in July, the United States had proposed an agreement on the nondiffusion of nuclear weapons from nuclear states to nonnuclear states as a way to assuage Soviet concerns that the United States would permit the Federal Republic of Germany to acquire nuclear weapons. The Soviets did not find the U.S. proposal satisfactory because it left the door open to West Germany receiving nuclear weapons as part of a multilateral NATO nuclear sharing agreement.

13. Andrei Gromyko was Soviet foreign minister since 1957.

Rusk: We really ought to get going on this and that we just really can't understand why they make such a [*unclear*] deal about on-site inspections, which can't possibly involve espionage. That this must be something else in their minds. But if he has any idea . . . he could give you more about what is really in their minds about this, do they really want to continue the testing? [*Unclear*]—

President Kennedy: Well, yeah, that. And then the other thing is: what he ought [to] say about Berlin, what he ought to say about Cuba? He ought to indicate what [*unclear*] are not in Cuba.

Rusk: Well, we have that proposed statement coming in on Cuba.

President Kennedy: [*to Robert Kennedy*] You come into that meeting on Cuba and Berlin.

Rusk: And then Berlin, I should think that, again, we hammer the business of the necessity of avoiding incidents, that the movement of the traffic from Friedrichstrasse to Brandenburg Gate or to the Brandenburg Bridge is intended to avoid incidents. And we hope their people will cooperate on that and that this is a matter that ought not to be allowed to [*unclear*] because [*unclear*]. But you've been fully briefed on that earlier report on this.

President Kennedy: Yes. Well, why don't we see whether we get—

McNamara: [*Unclear*] the Attorney General add to this note also, to repeat again that it's the President's personal instruction to the Secretary of Defense that there will be no U-2 overflights . . . wish he could.

Hillenbrand: Right. And also about photography.

McNamara: Yes, and also about the photography.

Hillenbrand: Yeah. I think coming from him—

McNamara: I believe it is extremely important that [*unclear*].

President Kennedy: And before you . . . Chip will have gotten this over to them? As soon as it's . . .

Bohlen: Yeah, we can get—

President Kennedy: But you go right now. You won't be at this, involved in this Cuba thing, so you can go ahead with it.

Bohlen: Well, [*unclear*].

President Kennedy: Then, there, when the press goes out, Manning ought to be told that he can reiterate to the press but—[14]

Bohlen: OK.

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14. Robert J. Manning was the State Department's press officer.

Bundy: Manning is right here and—

President Kennedy: Can he get this message [*unclear*]?

Bundy: Yeah.

President Kennedy: Well, we just reiterate that it was a U-2 flight. [*Bohlen can be heard indistinctly in the background.*]

Rusk: Do we put that in the actual statement?

President Kennedy: No, but the press, because—

Bundy: It was obviously not engaged in photography by the Soviets' own times? Did they give times?

Unidentified: Yes.

Bundy: 19:21 hours Moscow time.

President Kennedy: That'll just be a part of the story.

Robert Kennedy: What if he says to me [*unclear*]?

Bundy: You can say it again that you don't know but you have the impression that flights, the planes of both sides have flown near each others' borders. This has happened.

Hillenbrand: I would suggest that when you say to this one . . . this flight, you know that we have to do air sampling, we have all sorts of routine missions with these aircraft, just as yours do.

Unidentified: And the ships, too.

Hillenbrand: We have just—

Rusk: We have all sorts of aircraft flying from Alaska down towards—

Unidentified: Excuse me.

President Kennedy: The whole problem, you see, is I don't know what that particular mission was, the plane was on.

Robert Kennedy: I know. We talked about it with [Director of Central Intelligence John] McCone.

President Kennedy: Well, it wasn't intended to be over your coast.

Rusk: And since it was at night, it obviously wasn't photographic or—

Robert Kennedy: Yeah.

Rusk: I think—

President Kennedy: Chip, can you—

Unidentified: The Attorney General—

President Kennedy: Chip, you've covered the [*unclear*]?

Bohlen: Do you want me to . . .

Hillenbrand: Chip, do you want [*unclear*] to a State Department—?

Bundy: Yes, and the instruction will—

Rusk: Now what about—

Bundy: Will you tell Manning and Pierre [Salinger] that we say nothing [*unclear*].

Rusk: [*Unclear.*]

Bohlen: Well [*unclear*] it will automatically get to [*unclear*].

Rusk: Well, that's right. We don't send anything over tomorrow.

Bundy: Let's not [*unclear*] Pierre's article.

Bohlen: Do you want me to call and see him?

President Kennedy: Why doesn't Chip take—what?

Rusk: I wouldn't go over to see him.

President Kennedy: Why not?

Rusk: Why doesn't he come to see me?

President Kennedy: He doesn't have to—what time?—Chip, just talk to him on the phone briefing him [on] the message [*unclear*]—

Rusk: Or I could send him the thing. . . . I wouldn't talk to him on the phone. Just a phone call telling him to . . .

Bohlen: Well, then I think we'd better do this. We'd better give this to him and then have it repeated in Moscow by McSweeney to the Russian [*unclear*].[15]

President Kennedy: Fine. That's the best way.

Rusk: Give him a copy of the statement we make here and then send this to Moscow.

Bohlen: Yeah, well, we won't get it . . . How do I get it to him? Send it to him?

President Kennedy: Have Chip call him up and read to him and say, "This is the message we're sending to McSween[ey], I'll send you over a copy of it but I wanted you to have it 'cause we're going to put out a statement—"

Rusk: Yeah. We're making a statement on it [*unclear*].

Meeting breaks up.

President Kennedy: McSween[ey] ought to be told, it seems to me, in the note that we send to him that you . . . this is what's been given to Dobrynin at whatever time it was and also about the public statement put out. So—

Rusk: Yeah. [*Unclear.*]

President Kennedy: As long as [*unclear*] have this by the time McSween[ey] gets this. McSween[ey] ought to know [*unclear*] will have it. Because, you know [*unclear*].

Bohlen: Yeah, we'll put this right on the wires . . .

Rusk: That's right. Let McSweeney know that it has been made public.

Bohlen: You have to make it public.

---

15. John M. McSweeney was the U.S. minister-counselor at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow.

Rusk: [*Unclear.*] [*Pause.*]
Unidentified: You took my estimate? [*Door closes.*]

The incident over Sakhalin introduced a new note of caution in U.S. intelligence gathering. At the next meeting of the Special Group, which oversaw covert action by the U.S. government, the Air Force successfully pushed through a policy of standing down for the time being all U-2 flights manned by the Air Force.[16] The CIA, which was the only other agency with a U-2 fleet, continued in the business. However, the loss of a U-2 leased to the Taiwanese government only a few days later would also put operational use of U-2s by the CIA under severe scrutiny.[17] By September 10, Kennedy officials, especially McGeorge Bundy and Dean Rusk, were asking the CIA to shape its plans for U-2 surveillance of Cuba so as to minimize the risk of an international incident. This would have an effect on the timeliness of warnings to President Kennedy of the Soviet buildup on the island.

Those events were still days away. In the meantime, after a little disjointed conversation, Kennedy's advisers walked out of the Oval Office. The President accompanied them and left the recorder running. Twelve minutes of hall chatter follow amidst general sounds of secretarial work. The President's secretary, Evelyn Lincoln, is heard answering two telephone calls.

At approximately noon, members of an Arkansas delegation led by Senator William Fulbright entered the West Wing of the White House. The group included the University of Arkansas's Schola Cantorum choir, which had just won first prize at a choir competition in Italy, and the ambassador of Italy, Sergio Fenoaltea. Two White House guards are overheard discussing the group.

White House Guard #1: Did you bring over the Italian guy [Ambassador Sergio Fenoaltea]?
White House Guard #2: Yeah. I got him.
A few minutes later the group approaches the empty Oval Office.

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16. From Marshall Carter to John McCone, 8 September 1962, in *CIA Documents,* McAuliffe, pp. 55–56.
17. "U-2 Overflights of Cuba, 29 August through 14 October 1962," 27 February 1963, ibid., pp. 127–37.

White House Greeter: Mr. Ambassador, how do you do?
Ambassador Fenoaltea: Very well.

Ten minutes after the Arkansas group had entered the private secretarial and staff office adjacent to the Oval Office to await the President, Kennedy reentered the Oval Office. He clearly had little idea who these people were or why they had been allowed to wait for him in an office usually closed to public visitors. No White House staffer had informed him that Senator William Fulbright and the Italian ambassador were waiting outside his office. Apparently preoccupied with the two difficult foreign policy matters of the day, Kennedy had forgotten that at his August 29 press conference he had hailed this Arkansan choir and promised the press corps that the choir would be visiting him at the White House within the new few days.

Staffer: It's all set up, Mr. President.
President Kennedy: Are you going to inform me now on what I ought to say?
Staffer: Angie's probably got it.[18]
President Kennedy: Well, ask Angie—
Staffer: Pierre [Salinger] set this thing up.[19]
Staffer: Schola Cantorum at the University of Arkansas.
President Kennedy: Are they?
Staffer: Who'll get Pierre?
Staffer: Pierre.
Staffer: [*Unclear*] to Pierre.
Staffer: Pierre!
Staffer: Are they there?
Unclear exchange. Angie Duke enters the Oval Office to clarify the situation for the President.
President Kennedy: You getting in on this Angie?
Angie Duke: Pierre's got it now.
President Kennedy: Where's Pierre?
Duke: He's down in his office—
President Kennedy: Listen, from now on, Mrs. Lincoln, whenever we've got a group, I want all the information right here.

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18. Angie Biddle Duke was the White House chief of protocol.
19. Pierre Salinger was the President's press secretary.

Amidst a babble of voices, the President asks McGeorge Bundy, who may have been with the President in the Oval Office throughout this momentary confusion, to find his secretary, Evelyn Lincoln.

President Kennedy: Whose [*unclear*] is this?

Bundy (?): [*Unclear.*]

President Kennedy: Tell her to come in here.

Bundy: Evelyn! [*The telephone rings.*]

President Kennedy: Who are those people standing there?

Evelyn Lincoln: I have no idea.

President Kennedy: Well, now don't let people come into your office to be listening to everything that goes on. Who are these people?

Lincoln: Who brought them in? Who brought them?

Staffer: They [*unclear*] take a picture. Mr. [*unclear*].

President Kennedy: Just keep them out until I'm ready for Christssake.

Lincoln: Who brought them here? [*Unclear.*]

Staffer: Ralph Tucker?

Lincoln: Ralph Tucker?

President Kennedy: Keep them out, Mrs. Lincoln.

Lincoln: I can't [*unclear*].

President Kennedy: I don't want people standing around.

The President and Bundy are intent on having a conversation about something that has just come to their attention. Amidst the babble in his office, Kennedy grabs a sheet of paper.

President Kennedy: This isn't coming in right. The United States government would like to give you a reminder [of its present course].

Bundy: Just an argument on how they couldn't [*unclear*] helpful to the effort. Particularly about the United States. How in the world . . . the fact of the matter is, three . . . background. Our people produced the requisition, everything.

President Kennedy: Yeah. I think we'd better have this thing organized. This is a shitty organization.

I never know what the hell I'm supposed to say . . . [what I could use] is any suggestions.

Bundy: [*Unclear*] but I think not.

The choir members were successfully ushered out to the Rose Garden. The President then joined them and the choir began to sing. The performance lasted nearly five minutes, after which the President spoke to the audience. Laughter can be heard faintly in the Oval Office in reaction

to the President's remarks outside, as well as some indistinct play-by-play from White House staffers chatting as the performance took place. At about 12:25 P.M., the President reentered the Oval Office. In a better mood, he asked that the Arkansans be given a White House tour.

President Kennedy: Let's see, can you get somebody to take them through the White House?

Can you [*unclear*] people remind everybody that whenever I have a group, give me a little history with suggested points and [*unclear*]?

Unidentified Staffer: Right. I will, sir.

Staffer: [*Unclear.*]

Staffer: But announce that you [*unclear*] out on the other side. We've worked that out. The sergeant's going to take them through.

Staffer: Yes.

Staffer: The sergeant . . .

The door opens. Someone says, "Gee, are you going to perform me that Boogie?" *Someone answers,* "Oh, yes, [this] afternoon." *The group passes through the corridor. There is a little chitchat.*

Unidentified: Oh, isn't that gorgeous.

The group from Arkansas has left and a few staffers were chatting. Telephones continued to ring, and Evelyn Lincoln's voice can be heard in the background. Forgotten, the machine in the Oval Office kept running.

12:35–1:00 P.M.

I think it's a question about Cuba in the future.

Meeting on Soviet Arms Shipments to Cuba[20]

The public event effectively broke Kennedy's meeting with his national security experts in two. While Chip Bohlen left to draft a response to the

20. Including President Kennedy, McGeorge Bundy, Marshall Carter, Robert Kennedy, Robert McNamara, Dean Rusk, and Theodore Sorensen. Tape 18, John F. Kennedy Library, President's Office Files, Presidential Recordings Collection.

Soviet note on the U-2 incident, the rest of them moved to the Cabinet Room to discuss Soviet activities in Cuba. At issue was what form of public statement was required to reassure the American people that Kennedy had matters under control. Congressmen, especially Senator Kenneth Keating of New York, had begun to question the White House's handling of the obvious buildup of Soviet weapons on the island. There were rumors of the installation of Russian missiles, certainly conventionally armed surface-to-air missiles (SAMs), but possibly even surface-to-surface nuclear rockets. Indeed, photography from a secret U-2 flight flown over the island on August 29 had just confirmed for Kennedy the existence of eight SAM sites.

Although there was as yet no firm evidence of nuclear missiles, some in Kennedy's inner circle think that it is only a matter of time before Khrushchev decides to install that kind of force in Cuba. This group, led by Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, viewed the impending public statement as a golden opportunity to send a clear warning to Khrushchev that the United States would never countenance a Soviet nuclear base in Castro's Cuba. In any case, the President wanted a public statement on this new Soviet defensive missile system found in Cuba. On August 31, he had told General Marshall Carter, who was running the CIA in John McCone's absence, to put the readout from the August 29 flight "in the box and nail it shut."[21] A freeze on sharing this information with anyone but the top foreign policymakers and analysts remained in effect. However, it was not going to last forever with interest so high on Capitol Hill and in the media.

President Kennedy remembered to turn the machine on as the Secretary of State, a skeptic about the possiblility of any Soviet nuclear adventure in Cuba, read aloud from a draft statement prepared by the State Department.

Tape machines were now running connected to microphones in both the empty Oval Office, where distant secretarial sounds could still be heard, and in the Cabinet Room, where the President's Cuba team had assembled.

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21. Lyman B. Kirkpatrick, Memorandum for the Director, "Action Generated by DCI Cables Concerning Cuban Low-Level Photography and Offensive Weapons," *CIA Documents*, McAuliffe, document 12.

Dean Rusk: [*reading from State draft press statement*[22]] ". . . in Latin America. Whatever armed strength the Cuban regime may develop will be restricted by whatever means—"

McGeorge Bundy: Agreed.

Rusk: "—may be necessary to that island. The U.S. will join with other hemisphere countries to insure that Cuba's increased military strength will amount to nothing more than an increased burden on the people of Cuba themselves."

Robert McNamara: I think that's excellent.

Bundy: I think that general sentiment—I wouldn't call it "increased military expen—increased expenditure on military gadgets." I really think we don't want to get into the position of being frightened by this group.

Rusk: But this sense that Bob McNamara has about any placing by the Soviets of a significant offensive capability in the hands of this self-announced aggressive regime in Cuba would be a direct and major challenge to this hemisphere and would warrant immediate and appropriate action.

McNamara: I worry about that because they already have 16 MiGs which—[23]

Rusk: Do you feel that the MiGs are [a] significantly aggressive [addition]?

McNamara: I do. And I further feel that they'll be adding to what could be interpreted as offensive strength in the months ahead.

President Kennedy: The missiles really are what are significant?

Bundy: Surface-to-surface missiles are the turning point.

Unidentified: SAMs.

Bundy: Unless they were to put jerry-built nuclear weapons on MiGs which is—

McNamara: Yeah.

Bundy: —not a likely configuration.

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22. The President's copy of this draft is in the "Cuba, Security, 1962" folder, President's Office Files, Box 115, John F. Kennedy Library. The document bears Kennedy's notations and underlining.

23. The MiGs are Soviet fighter and ground attack aircraft. By the summer of 1962, the Soviets were to have delivered at least 41 jets and reconnaissance aircraft (MiG-19s and MiG-15s) to the Cubans. See the 4 May 1961 report by Soviet defense minister Rodion Malinovsky as quoted in *"One Hell of a Gamble": Khrushchev, Castro, and Kennedy, 1958–1964*, by Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali (New York: Norton, 1997), p. 99. The U.S. government had detected these older model aircraft. It had not yet, however, detected the ongoing delivery of the most-advanced Soviet fighter/ground attack aircraft, the MiG-21.

President Kennedy: No.

McNamara: They can, they may well put surface-to-surface missiles or missile launchers, artillery or missile launchers in there. They have that equipment in their own force. In the first place, it will be a question: Do they have it or don't they have it? We won't be sure. Is it equipped with a nuclear warhead or isn't it equipped with a nuclear warhead? Is it substantial or isn't it substantial? I just worry about the President having made a statement which can be used as a lever by elements of the Congress and of the public, unless we know exactly what we're going to do under those circumstances. If we have a plan, we know what it is and we're are all agreed on it, then I think a firm statement is excellent. But unless we have . . . it seems to me we could cause great [*unclear*].

Bundy: Our preliminary analysis of the consequences for us, Bob, of the establishment of a surface-to-surface nuclear capability gives me at least the feeling that we wouldn't have to act.

Rusk: I think we'd have to act, Bob, exactly how and by what stages we'd . . . for example, I would suppose that if you're going to take on a bloodbath in Cuba, you'd precede it by a systematic blockade to weaken Cuba before you actually go to put anybody ashore.

McNamara: See I wonder why we . . . if we do it then, why wouldn't we do it today? This is one of the actions that we can consider today as a matter of fact. There's no question the Soviets are shipping arms to Cuba; that's clear. They've said so. Now, we can—

President Kennedy: The reason we don't is that, is because we figure that they may try to blockade Berlin and we would then try to blockade Cuba. But I think that the reason we don't today is the [*unclear*] is that it wouldn't do them that much harm for quite a while—

Rusk: [*Unclear.*]

President Kennedy: —and then Berlin would be the obvious response—

Rusk: [*Unclear.*] The configuration in Cuba still is defensive. Now we've gone to great effort to try to find serious, significant Cuban penetration into the other countries around the Caribbean. The defense minister of Venezuela said they had captured only one Czech Bren gun. They just haven't found anything. And, we've been having great difficulty in finding . . . except through money, Mexico [*unclear*] excuse.

Bundy: The Jordan report on this subject would be very clear and that's the principal argument . . .

Rusk: But we've, but we really have . . . If we have to go to the U.N. to prove Cuban indirect aggression against the other members of the hemisphere, we'd have a heck of a job proving it.

Bundy: What we find is a lot of energetic students being taught "truth," which is unfortunately not actionable.

Rusk: You see, at Punta del Este, we told Venezuela to capture a big arms cache from Cuba and [*unclear*] helicopter pad [*unclear*].[24] Well, there was nothing there according to the Venezuelan minister of defense.

I am just saying, Mr. President, that we, that there is very little evidence, hard evidence, that the Cubans are really directly engaged in subversive activities in other countries around the Caribbean and Latin America. We haven't even been catching arms. We haven't been able to pin down hard evidence of the kinds of actions that would lay the basis for any direct action in Cuba. The principal posture of Cuba at the present time is defensive as far as the policy is concerned.

President Kennedy: I think we ought to get two things. First, what statement I put out; and second, whether we ought to get the leadership down here, the Republican, key gasbags and others. This is . . . it's sort of [*unclear*] which they have, [then] they can put it out in a way that looks like we're not putting anything out, probably give them everything we do have. At least, it's on the, it's on the record.

As I say, one of the problems is that a lot of stuff has been out, but it seeps out in a way that [will] convince these fellows . . . to look like they're putting stuff out that we won't put out. So, I think, that maybe, particularly this surface-to-air missile thing we ought to give them. Does everybody agree to that? We're going to have to put that out anyway because that's going to leak out—

Bundy: I think so.

President Kennedy: —in two or three days.

Bundy: I think [*unclear*] it would be better.

Rusk: Bob McNamara and [*unclear*] I are now scheduled to go before the Foreign Relations and Armed Services Committee of the Senate tomorrow morning for a briefing on the Soviet situation that's bound to get into this.[25] And I think we'd better have the leadership down here and—

President Kennedy: Today.

Rusk: —and cancel that meeting.

Bundy: You have the leadership, I think, at breakfast tomorrow, Mr. President.

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24. The Organization of American States foreign ministers' meeting was at Punta del Este, Uruguay, 22 to 31 January 1962.
25. On Wednesday, 5 September 1962.

President Kennedy: No, I have the leader—I meant the Republicans and Democrats.

Bundy: Oh, the regular, bipartisan body.

McNamara: There is a related point: You have asked, Mr. President, on two or three occasions whether we believe it would be wise to ask for authority from Congress to call up reserve and guard forces while they're out of session, if international events make that desirable. I personally believe it would be wise to ask for that authority, assuming that we could achieve it without controversy. It relates to Cuba, in one respect, that the forces that we would require could be required for Berlin, Southeast Asia, or Cuba.

Rusk: Mr. President, I think I would agree with the Secretary of Defense on that. I think we . . . it would be very helpful for us to have it but I think it would more effective if we could do it quickly and quietly. The Soviets would get the message.

McNamara: Yes. Yes—

Rusk: But, if we're going to have a great turmoil—

McNamara: Yes.

Rusk: —and hullaballoo about it, then it would be better to have that in connection with a specific action taken—

McNamara: Exactly—

Rusk: —[*unclear*] call the Congress back in special session.

McNamara: Exactly; but I mention it now because if the leadership wants to act in relation to Cuba, one of the best actions I can think of is exactly this.

President Kennedy: Well, now—if we, let's say we get them down here at five this afternoon, on an off-the-record basis we give them more or less what we know about these things and tell them when this information is to become available and the number of people that are there . . . and any other question they want. In the meanwhile we're going to go over this statement. At least we're going to have something to say about this. It's going to get out . . . so that I can say to Pierre to put it out at six. Whatever he's going to put out, he's going to put out the information about these sites and any other statement we've got [*unclear*] worked out.

Bundy: I would suggest that we be very careful, Mr. President, about going with that full statement today simply because the issues involved are very grave and—

President Kennedy: That's right but I think what we've got to do is . . . we can't permit somebody to break this story before we do.

Bundy: The SAM site business can be broken promptly. That doesn't—

Bundy and the President start talking over each other.

President Kennedy: But everyone's going to want to know what we're going to do about it.

Bundy: We don't have to put all these statements out at once. They don't—

Robert Kennedy: Can I raise a—

President Kennedy: Yeah.

Robert Kennedy: I think that [*unclear*] that while you were out that I don't think that this is just a question about what we are going to do about this. I think it's a question about Cuba in the future. And then I think that it's the judgment of everybody around this table that this is only one step—we've seen it being built up for the last six months or eight months, whatever it might be—that this is going [to] continue. There's going to be . . . three months from now, there's going to be something else going on, six months from now . . . That eventually it's very likely that they'll establish a naval base there for submarines perhaps, or that they'll put surface-to-surface missiles in.

And what steps, we—what position will we be in at that time, if we consider that surface-to-surface missiles, and I think maybe we should reach a determination on that, that surface-to-surface missiles in Cuba would be so harmful that we would have to undertake an invasion of Cuba, or a blockade which eventually would lead to an invasion and the Marines going in, and the airborne, et cetera. Then, whether . . . Or even a naval base or some of these other things. That in this kind of a statement, that you traced the history of Cuba and even mention the Monroe Doctrine and say, point out that this was captured in a different way and the Monroe Doctrine doesn't apply as it did in the past; but we still have our responsibilities to national security, that, making some of these points that were made in Secretary Rusk's statement, and then also say that there're certain things that would violate our national security. And we would then have to take appropriate action and such things would be the establishment of surface-to-surface missiles or the putting of, of, of a nuclear weapons base.

Now, my point is, I think that it's much more difficult for them to take steps like that after you've made that statement. That if they put them in and then you take offensive action, then I think that the Soviet Union is almost committed to support them. Number two, we're going to be in a much tougher position in the future if the Soviet Union does sign a treaty with Cuba because then if you invade Cuba, or do . . . take any steps like that, you know that you're going to have a world war. At the present time, [if] you invaded Cuba, you're not, you're not, certain of

that. In fact, I should think that they probably wouldn't support . . . a lot of screams around the world.

But I think that this statement . . . this gives us a reason to put out a statement as to what really is going to be our policy, not just on the surface-to-air missiles, but what is our . . . going to be our policy as far as Cuba in the future is concerned. I think that's—

Rusk: The great problem, the great difficulty, of course, as we all know [*unclear*] . . . I think that, looking at Cuba, I think that it would be fairly easy to come to answers to the questions that are posed at the present time. But the United States has such a worldwide confrontation with the Soviet Union that when the time comes to act, the President will have to take into account how that action relates to the worldwide confrontation and what the situation is everywhere else at the same time because his problems are total and comprehensive. I mean, if we were relatively isolated in the world, which we were before World War II, we could concentrate on Cuba and say, "If this in Cuba, then that follows." But we've got a million men overseas in confrontation with the Soviet bloc and this is a part of that confrontation. This is the thing that makes it so agonizingly difficult.

Robert Kennedy: Yeah. I understand that. So, therefore, I think that you really have to reach a determination of whether putting surface-to-surface missiles in Cuba would be where you'd really have to face up to it, and figure that you are going to have to take your chances on something like that. Everything you do, whether you do it in Southeast Asia, or Berlin or Cuba or wherever is going to have some effect on the Soviet Union elsewhere. And whether there are certain things that they do that—

President Kennedy: But isn't this what we're saying? As I understood, that statement was that when they've got a—

Robert Kennedy: Yeah, but [*unclear*] saying—

President Kennedy: —upset the general balance in—

Robert Kennedy: The point of that, the Secretary makes, Secretary McNamara says they've got that at the present time.

President Kennedy: Yes.

Robert Kennedy: Under that definition of a "substantial offensive capability," quote unquote, that at the present time that the Cubans and the Russians have that in Cuba and that the . . .

Bundy: Would our [*unclear*], air-defense posture against those MiGs be [*unclear*], Bob?

Robert Kennedy: Some congressman or senator can come in and say, "Prove that they haven't at the present time 16 MiGs," and, then you'd

be in trouble. . . . "Why aren't you doing something [*unidentified mumbling*] right at this moment?" Now maybe that—

Bundy: Respond how?

Robert Kennedy: Maybe you don't have to say surface-to-surface missiles but I think that this is an opportunity where we really face up to what's going to happen a year from today. Because they are going to get tougher [*unclear*]. [*Bundy is whispering to the President.*]

Rusk: [*Unclear.*] I wouldn't suppose, and of course this is . . . Bob to . . . [*the President is heard whispering,* "has to study now."]. But I would not suppose that the mere fact that a, for example, that a motor-torpedo boat can come roar up along the Florida coast and throw a few shots ashore would mean that that was an offensive capability. I'm not sure that MiGs unarmed with nuclear weapons would provide any offensive capability of the significance that we're talking about here.

McNamara: No, I don't mean to overemphasize the offensive capability of them. But they're going to continue to increase whatever offensive capability they have—

Bundy: I think that really is a question, Bob. It seems to me that everything they have put in so far, really is, insofar as you can make these distinctions, a defensive weapon. Fighters are defensive aircraft for use against bombers and photographic reconnaissance. The SAMs are the same thing, surface-to-air missiles don't go . . . are a stupid way of reaching Florida.

Robert Kennedy: Well, Mac, that's what you do, I mean, at the present juncture, if you were them—

Bundy: No, I'm only saying that the other step seems to me a much larger step than the development of the kind of thing we've seen over the last year and a half which is fully consistent with their behavior in a lot of other countries.

Robert Kennedy: I just . . . I think we can all assume that they are going to take those steps eventually.

Rusk: No, I think, Bob, even there that if we were imposing a blockade, for example, we could make it very clear that any firing on the American mainland by MiGs or anything else would lead immediately to the destruction of Cuba.

Bundy: That's right.

McNamara: Oh I think that's completely clear. What they're going to try to do is build up a deterrent power. The first, and most obvious steps, are air defense. But those are not likely to be enough because really their air defense isn't worth a damn. We can—

Bundy: If it were a war, I agree with you.

McNamara: All right. And therefore—

President Kennedy: If we were attacking the Soviet Union, it wouldn't be worth much?

McNamara: No. Against . . . in Cuba it isn't worth—

President Kennedy: Yeah.

McNamara: —much and even in the Soviet Union, it isn't worth very much, Mr. President, because we can go underneath it. So that isn't going to be sufficient for the Cubans. They are going to say, "Well, that really didn't help us much. We have to have more of a deterrent power." And this, this—

President Kennedy: The only real deterrent against a country our size is two things: First, the fact the Soviet[s] can act against us.

McNamara: Yes.

President Kennedy: [*Unclear*] in Iran, Turkey or anyplace else. And secondly, if that they can get a ground-to-ground—

McNamara: Yes.

President Kennedy: —with a nuclear weapon. That's the real deterrent.

McNamara: Yes.

President Kennedy: Otherwise we can always move against Cuba. It just takes two more divisions than it took . . .

McNamara: Exactly, exactly or a few more suppressive aircraft.

Rusk: Mr. President, I think there is one thing that we can be—

Unidentified: Yes.

Rusk: —as certain about is . . . it can be a given that they have no . . . the Soviet Union would never in the world permit a nuclear weapon to be used against us from Cuba, except as part of a general nuclear war.

President Kennedy: That's why I agree. I don't think . . . why they give the, and why do they give the . . . Then why don't we give them the . . . ?

Rusk: Now, they could—If they should announce some morning that they were placing nuclear weapons in Cuba—

President Kennedy: Under Soviet control.

Rusk: Whether they did or not; they just announced it, that could cause some real problems.

President Kennedy: What is it you suggest that we announce today, aside from this statement, which is rather long? What is it, in short, you think we ought to announce as far as what our future action should be towards Cuba? Aside from consultations, or aside from Guantánamo?[26]

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26. The U.S. Naval Base at Guantánamo Bay. The Cuban government granted the United States a lease for the base in 1903 and extended it in an agreement signed in 1934.

What Bobby, I guess, is saying is that we should announce today that if they put in ground-to-ground missiles, we will—

Robert Kennedy: They take certain [*unclear*]—I think, no I think some study should go on—

Rusk: Well, if we designated ground-to-ground missiles or we specified the nuclear weapon, I think we would create a kind of panic that the facts themselves don't now justify.

Bundy: That's correct.

Rusk: And that this could heat the matter up much faster than if we could get some general language, then, take account of the point that Bob McNamara made. . . . It would be better to get a warning to the Soviets in more general terms so that we do not create for them a major prestige problem in not moving down that trail and then make it very clear to our friends in the hemisphere—

President Kennedy: This is . . . the key sentence is, "Any placing by the Soviets of a significant offensive capability in the hands of this self-announced . . . would be a direct and major challenge . . . would warrant immediate—"

Rusk: "appropriate action."

Robert Kennedy: Of course they've challenged us, though, repeatedly. We've got the Monroe Doctrine and they've spit in our eye on it.[27] The idea we're going to challenge again or then. . . .

McNamara: The next sentence is excellent.[28] Very strong.

Bundy: Yeah. It's a very important sentence.

McNamara: I agree. I think it can stand without the preceding sentence.[29]

Rusk: I think we ought to be careful, too, about supposing that the Monroe Doctrine has somehow disappeared or receded into the background. What has happened to the Monroe Doctrine is that it, in the

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27. The Monroe Doctrine, proclaimed by President James Monroe in 1823, constituted a warning to European powers not to intervene in the Western Hemisphere. In the twentieth century, it provided a rationale for U.S. intervention in the Caribbean region. President Theodore Roosevelt declared as a "corollary" to the doctrine that the United States should maintain stable conditions and not give outside powers any cause to intervene in the region.

28. The next in the draft, with underlining as found on the President's own copy, reads, "Further I say to our friends in Latin America that whatever armed strength the Cuban regime may develop will be *restricted* by whatever means may be necessary *to that island*."

29. The previous sentence was "Any placing by the Soviets of a significant offensive capability in the hands of this self-announced aggressive regime in Cuba would be a direct and major challenge to all this hemisphere stands for and would warrant immediate and appropriate (forceful) action." In Kennedy's copy, *forceful* is underscored.

first instance, is a hemisphere problem. The Rio Pact.[30] Implementation of the Monroe Doctrine would be attempted primarily through hemisphere action. But it still remains there as an element of American policy and our own national self-defense. If we ever needed to move and we'd move on the basis of the historic, special regime in this hemisphere. I think your press conference—

President Kennedy: Of course, the point is that the hemisphere—they are being invited in, not forcing their way in. And the Monroe Doctrine was for another situation, which was that the country came and invaded Latin America. This is where they are not invading it; they are being asked in by the government, which is its de facto government.

Rusk: We also [*unclear*] Mr. President. We never did, so far as I can recall at the moment, we never used the Monroe Doctrine as a flash-pan reaction to a particular situation. It was a basis for diplomatic action, for gnawing at it, for insisting to other governments that they respect it and take it. And it took a lot of time in most instances to apply the Monroe Doctrine.

Door opens and closes. There is a short pause.

I think, Mr. President, it would be a little difficult to talk about this additional information, or to say anything sort of—we have here on the fourth page—without some general reference and some background. I'm not sure that this would be too sharp to say [*unclear*] look at it and see that we should say [*unclear*] now.

President Kennedy: I don't know about number "D. Informal consultation."[31]

Rusk: Of course that is not a—

President Kennedy: Why don't we just say . . . take . . . consult with foreign ministers, other members—let's just put it that way.

Rusk: Why we can combine C and D.[32] Yeah. Sure.

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30. The Rio Treaty of 1947 (Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance), better known as the Rio Pact, was a collective security agreement. Under its provisions, an attack against one American state would be considered an attack against all.

31. The draft ends with a list of six measures to be initiated by the President, lettered A through G. Letter D reads, "I have asked the Secretary of State to take full advantage of the forthcoming meeting of the U.N. General Assembly to arrange for informal consultations with the Foreign Ministers of the other members of the Organization of American States on recent developments in Cuba as they may affect the security of the hemisphere; this is in accord with suggestions which have come from several of our Latin American friends."

32. C reads, "I have asked the Secretary of State to consult with our friends in the Caribbean area about ways in which they can assist in the above programs further to insure their protection against the threat of Cuban military strength."

President Kennedy: Good. Now, this . . . what about G?[33] This is saying we are going to recognize the government-in-exile, is it?

Rusk: No, this does not go quite that far. It's a move in that direction. But our great problem there is that the refugees are in complete disorder so far as leadership.

Bundy: I would question whether we want to—if we do this—then the one that is formed will look like our puppet. It will be the Cuban government-in-exile formed by the President on his instructions. There is some disadvantage in that.

Rusk: I think we might be able to shorten this in various respects.

President Kennedy: Well, I think, that we can shorten this thing, boil it down. The key thing you need right now are these missiles, also put them into proportion: We are in much more danger from the Soviet Union than we are from Cuba.

McNamara: Sure.

President Kennedy: So that this thing again, the fixation on Cuba as opposed to someplace else, is really, if they're to recognize that the missiles have changed . . . There are dangers in them. But other than that . . . we don't want them to fall into that . . . we want to kind of make it clear to the country that [*unclear as Bundy begins to speak*] get our information as quickly as possible.

Bundy: In that context—It seems to me, Mr. President, I would suggest that we get the information out of the White House because the information, the question has been raised as to whether you had all the dope, were getting the thing straight. And that needs to be got straight. Then I, I at least would suggest at least that the major points might better be made by the Secretary of State precisely because we are not doing anything very enormous at the moment there.

President Kennedy: Now, the only key thing would be this, all of this . . .

Bundy: You could reinforce it at a press conference.

President Kennedy: Would be . . . whatever armed strength they develop . . . I mean, they seem to put a lot into this thing about . . . why they . . . so, this is going to be used against other Caribbean, so that sentence is rather important.

Bundy: Very important. I agree.

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33. G reads, "I feel sure as more and more Russians arrive in Cuba, more and more Cubans will be thinking and saying: 'Cuba sí, Russia no.' To take full advantage of this fact I hereby invite and urge Cuban exiles everywhere to unite within a single organization in which opportunities are left for eventual major participation at top levels by those resisting Communist domination within Cuba."

Rusk: I think that's the kind of statement that has to be made by the President. The declaration of a security, in effect, a security guarantee to all—

Bundy: To the Caribbean states

Rusk: —all of Cuba's neighbors [*unclear*].

President Kennedy: I think what we ought to do is . . . why don't you get . . . working.

Bundy: Yes, we can shorten it up.

President Kennedy: With Ted [Sorensen], to shorten it up, tighten it up. Then let's have a—Bobby's going to see this fellow at 2:15—then let's have a meeting at, let's get the leadership down here at five; all we're going to do really is to tell them about these surface—

Bundy: Bring them up—That will be essentially for briefing by General [Marshall] Carter then?

President Kennedy: That's right. Now, how much do we tell them [about] how we got it?

Marshall Carter: We can give them a briefing, sir, that would give them all without telling them exactly how we got it.

President Kennedy: I think you've got to say, you would say that—when we did get it—because, you see, at the press conference I said that we had no evidence.

Bundy: No confirmation. Fully confirmed conclusions were possible only when, Thursday—

President Kennedy: Friday.

Bundy: —or Friday.

Robert Kennedy: Not till Saturday.

Bundy: It was Thursday night and Friday morning, wasn't it?

Unidentified: That's right. It was Thursday night.

President Kennedy: OK. Now you can work on this. So that part's all right. I don't—there's nothing particularly . . . I think you can just say you got it and describe what it is to them. By then we will have this statement in order and then I think at that time the Secretary can say we want to keep some proportion. We've got Berlin and the big danger's it would—They don't have offensive capability against us and they also, they don't have an ability to, in the final analysis, to prevent us from doing what we think needs to be done. But the big problem is the fact of these other obligations. So, if we lock them in, that takes care of really the big [*unclear*] physically.

Bundy: I think you can, do you have a judgment, is today the time to reach that other larger question of whether we want to indicate that some such phrase "the significant offensive capability or further development which might create a direct hazard" or something of this sort? Whether you want to make that [*unclear*]?

President Kennedy: Well, Bobby are you suggesting that we say a specific thing rather than [*unclear*] "significant offensive"—?

Robert Kennedy: Well I might be—could I work on it—

President Kennedy: OK.

Robert Kennedy: —for a little while?

President Kennedy: We'll need it in—

Robert Kennedy: That's my feeling. I think that we should take this opportunity.

President Kennedy: Well, now, do we want to meet at four here and [put an] end to this thing, in a new . . . form, with everybody having given it some thought—?

Bundy: Right.

President Kennedy: And then we'll have the leadership at five.

Bundy: You . . . And your current thought is that we, you would then issue a statement through Pierre at the end of the afternoon?

President Kennedy: That is correct. Even if it's confined—

Bundy: To a very limited—

President Kennedy: —to a statement of what the facts are plus this key sentence from page 4. [*to someone else*] That's all right [*unclear*]. But even if—

The meeting ended and Kennedy left to shake hands in the Oval Office with a congressional candidate from Missouri. After that, he went to the Mansion for lunch and a swim.

4:00–4:50 P.M.

The difficulty here is that the intervention is being invited. That's what's causing all our difficulties . . .

Drafting Meeting on the Cuba Press Statement[34]

In the three hours since this group last met, Robert Kennedy has been very busy. Besides drafting a new version of the statement on Cuba for the President, the Attorney General met with Soviet ambassador

34. President Kennedy, McGeorge Bundy, Marshall Carter, Ray S. Cline, C. Douglas Dillon, Carl Kaysen, Robert Kennedy, Curtis LeMay, Edwin Martin, Robert McNamara, Paul Nitze,

Anatoly Dobrynin at the Soviet Embassy. The Russians requested this meeting to hand over a private letter from Khrushchev in response to the new Anglo-American proposals on the test ban matter. Kennedy came back from that meeting with little that was positive. Khrushchev was unwilling to countenance a partial test ban without some form of restraint on future nuclear tests underground. The Attorney General had made use of the meeting to mention Cuba, but the Soviet ambassador said nothing to deter Kennedy from his belief that it was only a matter of time before Moscow put nuclear missiles on the island.[35]

The group was larger for this second Cuban meeting of the day. Among the new participants were the Treasury secretary, Douglas Dillon; the assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs, Edwin Martin; and the Air Force Chief of Staff, General Curtis LeMay. Kennedy was widening the circle to confirm the instincts of his key advisers and to tighten the statement before it went out. Discussion now centered on the new Robert Kennedy draft. In the struggle over whether to use the evening's statement to send a warning to the Soviets, Robert Kennedy had scored a victory.

The President started recording as he and his key advisers were considering how much of the intelligence data at hand on the Soviet buildup should be revealed in this statement.

Dean Rusk : [*Unclear*] ships [*unclear*] instead of actions, suggesting he wants [*unclear*].

President Kennedy: I think in this one, we ought to say . . . and to avoid having the exact number of days ago—

McGeorge Bundy: I think so.

President Kennedy: Because otherwise it looks like it's only been the last minute.

Bundy: Well, I would say if it's going to go, "It has become clear that *the* suspected *landing* craft [*unclear*].

Rusk: I would not put [*unclear*] in terms . . . They would say yes. And we can't be sure of that fact.

Theodore Sorensen, and Maxwell Taylor. Others attending the meeting but not identified as having spoken include Charles Bohlen and Martin Hillenbrand. Tape 19, John F. Kennedy Library, President's Office Files, Presidential Recordings Collection.

35. What Robert Kennedy did not know was that indeed his suspicions were correct and Soviet missiles were on their way to Cuba, though they had not arrived there. However, Ambassador Dobrynin was as much in the dark about these missile deployments as the U.S. government.

Bundy: Here is the foreign intelligence [*unclear*] because this [*unclear*] clear if we can get the substantive [*unclear*] on the side of [*unclear*]. [*Pages are flipped.*]

President Kennedy: I think probably, in here somewhere, we probably ought to say is how many [*unclear*] technicians there are, military technicians there are [*unclear*]. [*Ongoing unintelligible background conversation.*]

Bundy: What level of force can be stated, numbers of technicians? On the order of 5,000, or don't you know?

Marshall Carter: Three thousand would be closer.[36]

Unidentified: Three thousand.

Unidentified: We're talking about military personnel.

President Kennedy: Technicians?

Carter: Technicians, yes sir. Military technicians.

Unidentified: Military technicians.

Carter: This is within the last month, sir.

Rusk: Military training and tactical personnel [*unclear*].

President Kennedy: Well, I think . . . let's put that sentence here: "That consistent with . . . there are . . ."

Unidentified: There appear to be about 3,000 in there, we have [*unclear*].

President Kennedy: That's about right.

Bundy: About 3,000.

Unidentified: Three thousand.

President Kennedy: What's this statement for?

Bundy: This is to get the facts. The factual paragraph will go before this. This is a slightly shortened version of the paragraph on page 1. [*A page is flipped.*]

President Kennedy: What about saying, "There are approximately 3,000 technicians this side [*unclear*] there are . . . however . . ."

Carter: You could add this up. [*Unclear*] presence. That might work.

Unidentified: You just take that one [*unclear*] should probably have another one.

Carter: Now on a substantive issue, Mr. President—

President Kennedy: Why don't I just [say], "As I have said before," Bobby, "As we have said before." [*Unclear*] just so it doesn't look like this is a new fact coming out, this one on the technicians.

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36. Ultimately, the White House would put out that there were approximately 3,500 Soviet military personnel in Cuba. The Attorney General's draft statement has not been found.

Ray Cline: Sir, you asked me a question this morning about our first evidence, we traced it back to mid-1960, to at least by July 1960 there were some military technical advisers—

President Kennedy: Right.

Cline: —sent to Cuba from the [Soviet] bloc.

Bundy: Was that more than three years ago?

Cline: No, [*unclear*].

Carter: We were carrying 500 up until this most recent influx, and there were 1,700 actually in, and 1,300 more within the last four or five days, so that it's about 3,500 military technicians, but we've been carrying approximately 2,000 agricultural and economic assistants, Soviet types, since they first started coming in in mid-'60.

Rusk: So that number has increased since they . . . [*Rusk keeps talking under Kennedy—unintelligible.*]

President Kennedy: OK, well we have to rewrite that section, I think. I'd rather see, "As we have said before."

Bundy: Yeah. Right.

Carter: We carry about 5,000, altogether: agricultural, economic, and military at this time. [*Pause.*]

Bundy: What this statement in this form admits . . . This paragraph here, that's the one on which we were having a discussion this morning.

Rusk: The Attorney General redrafted it, as we said this morning . . .

Robert Kennedy (?): We'll look at that.

Rusk: There is a paragraph here that I believe might . . . we might just want to make two or three small changes. I think [*unclear*]. [*Lot of paper rustling. Short, unclear exchanges.*]

Robert Kennedy: The Secretary thinks that you should . . .

Rusk: It's page 4, I believe [*unclear*].

Unidentified: Have you seen this piece of paper?

Unidentified: [*Unclear.*]

Carter: [*Unclear*] I was more concerned about the first page with the facts [*unclear*]. That one there that you [*unclear*].

Unidentified: Coordination.

Rusk: This last paragraph on page 4.

President Kennedy: Why don't we just start at the top of page 4: "Clearly the recent acceleration of Soviet military aid to Cuba is coming dangerously close to a violation of the Monroe Doctrine." I think that's a . . . it's an ambivalent, ambiguous position. What [*unclear*] would be the subject of endless conversation about what does constitute a violation and what does not. [*Bundy can be heard indistinctly in the background.*]

Edwin Martin: Well Mr. President, the "however" clause which immediately followed that sort of impliedly says—

President Kennedy: —But what is the "violation?"

Martin: What is the "vio—"? They have not yet done the following things and the implication is that that would be—

President Kennedy: I think we ought to leave this out, this Monroe—

Douglas Dillon: We could get into a terrible fight about the Monroe Doctrine, because—

President Kennedy: It's so vague.

Dillon: —others would say it has already been clearly violated.

President Kennedy: I think we ought to leave the Monroe Doctrine out of that paragraph. I don't think it's necessary anyway.[37]

Bundy: I think if we do leave it out, if we leave out of any statement we make, there is no point in calling attention to it in the statement at all because it has the difficulty Douglas [Dillon] described.

Rusk: The . . . Then what about calling attention to the inter-American security arrangement [*unclear*] connection?

President Kennedy: Well, I think we can just leave out the words "since the Monroe [Doctrine] was first announced." Just say "for over a century and a half" or something. Or it would just say, "For many years the United—the American states," that would be the bottom of page 2. "For many years, the American states have consistently maintained their right to prevent the use of their ter—"

Is this the principle of our agreements to prevent the use of the territory by nonmilitary [nonhemispheric] powers or is it to prevent the seizure of territory, or—What exactly is the Rio Treaty? What does it provide? Is that the key document, the Rio Treaty that will overturn it?

Bundy: The collective security arrangement.

Rusk: Well, I think it's a general collective security phrase to ensure the safety and territorial integrity of the defense of the Western Hemisphere [*unclear.*] [*Two other voices—unclear.*]

Cline: How about the Declaration on Solidarity for the Preservation of the Political Integrity of the American States, 1954, says—under the

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37. The final statement did not contain any reference to the Monroe Doctrine. The U.S. position was that it had a right to react to anything that posed a threat to U.S. security or to the security of other members of the inter-American system.

Rio Treaty—said it [*reading*] "declares that the domination or control of political institutions of any American State by the international communist movement, extending to this Hemisphere the political system of an extra-continental power, would constitute a threat to the sovereignty and political independence of the American States, endangering the peace of America—"[38] I think—

Rusk: There were sweeping reservations that were read into that at the time that [*unclear*].

Cline: That's right. This is the most clear statement that we have under the Rio Treaty on Communist intervention. It was called, "Against International Communist Intervention at Caracas, Venezuela."

Martin: That figured an inaccurate use of force [*unclear*] it all together.

Rusk: Yes, I think the wording at the bottom of page 2 will have to be revised to bring in the actual language of the Rio Pact.

Robert Kennedy: Can you get me—What is the language here of the Rio Treaty?[39]

President Kennedy: The key point is that the Monroe Doctrine—and all these things—is talking about the forcible seizure of the territory of one country, of a country in the Western Hemisphere, by a foreign power. The difficulty here is that the intervention is being invited. That's what's causing all our difficulties, but we therefore have to . . .

Robert Kennedy: The Article 5 of the Rio Treaty says that "the territory or sovereignty or political independence of any American State is affected by an aggression which is not an armed attack."[40]

Rusk: That's right.

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38. "Declaration of Solidarity for the Preservation of the Political Integrity of the American States Against International Communist Intervention," accepted on 13 March 1954 at the conclusion of the Tenth Inter-American Conference, held at Caracas, Venezuela. For the full text of the declaration, see *Department of State Bulletin* 30, no. 769 (22 March 1954): 420. The passage continues: ". . . and would call for a meeting of consultation to consider the adoption of measures in accordance with existing treaties."

39. The Attorney General is trying to rework his draft to incorporate these new ideas. Ultimately his draft would be completely revised and cut.

40. He is presumably referring to Article 6, which reads: "If the inviolability or the integrity of the territory or the sovereignty or political independence of any American State should be affected by an aggression which is not an armed attack or by an extra-continental or intra-continental conflict, or by any other fact or situation that might endanger the peace of America, the Organ of Consultation shall meet immediately in order to agree on the measures which must be taken in case of aggression to assist the victim of the aggression or, in any case, the measures

Robert Kennedy: "Or by any other type of situation that might endanger the peace."

President Kennedy: The whole name "aggression" is the point. These people are being invited in, that's why—

Robert Kennedy: It's just whether the Soviet Union establishing bases here or putting missiles here, whether that is in fact an aggression which doesn't constitute an armed attack [*unclear*].

Dillon: It depends a lot on the—

President Kennedy: Well, we don't have to settle that question today, though. I mean, this is really leading up to our main points. So that I don't think we have to . . . I think the first sentence, [*reading*] "Considering U.S. policy is necessary [*unclear*], the special relationship among the countries of the Western Hemisphere, a relationship which has existed for many years and which has been the subject of many hemispheric treaties."

Rusk: Inter-American treaties.

President Kennedy: Inter-American treaties. [*reading*] "This special relationship has been acknowledged throughout the world, and is recognized by Article 52 which provides for regional security arrangements."[41] Then we go on to January of this year . . .

[*Pause.*]

Robert Kennedy: You better get that changed.

Unidentified: Yes, sir.

President Kennedy: All right. Then I would say at the top of [page] 4, I'd leave that paragraph out.

Rusk: Then first, [page] 4. [*Unclear.*]

President Kennedy: First, take it out and say, "There is . . ." Yeah.

Rusk: At the bottom of page—

Robert Kennedy: Now what does that—

President Kennedy: [*testily*] You have to understand, we're going to have to redo this.

Robert Kennedy: Yeah.

President Kennedy: I just want to get the key . . . you have to lead up to explaining that.

Robert Kennedy: Yeah.

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which should be taken for the common defense and for the maintenance of the peace and security of the Continent." For the full text of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, 1947, see *Department of State Bulletin* 17, no. 429 (21 September 1947): 565–67.

41. Of the Charter of the United Nations.

Rusk: [*Unclear.*] "Soviet assistance" at the bottom of page 4, "limited to weapons normally associated with defense."

President Kennedy: Yeah.

Rusk: And knock out the next sentence, and then say, "[*Unclear*] say to our friends in Latin America [*unclear*]."

Unidentified: Well, you really want to say that there is nothing in the Soviet announcement which foreshadows such an eventuality; there is nothing there which precludes it either. And you just wanted [*unclear*] our way.

Carl Kaysen: The reason for that sentence was really to put them . . . to read our interpretation into it, and to force them into [*unclear*].

Bundy: That puts us in a position of depending on their words.

President Kennedy: Well, maybe it wouldn't be if you keep in that sentence, "It will continue to be so confined." I would say, that if it was going to happen, then we would take action against it. So I would think that . . .

Rusk: I think rather than say "it will continue to be so confined," "it must be so confined."

President Kennedy: We say "bloc assistance" [*unclear*].

Unidentified: [*Unclear.*]

Dillon: If you say, "It must be so confined," does that mean you're going to confine it?

Rusk: Well, that's what "it will continue to be so confined" means, in this context. Not negotiable.

Dillon: [*Unclear*] statement . . .

Unidentified: What's this about [*unclear*]? [*Pause. Mumbling.*]

Rusk: "Should it be otherwise, the greatest questions would arise . . . but otherwise the greatest questions would arise for our friends in Latin America."

Unidentified: [*Unclear.*]

Unidentified: With all this information, it's a little less red flaggish.

Carter: [*Unclear.*]

Dillon: The only thing I think you want to be careful of is . . . making a threat to do something if they get some particular weapon in Cuba. If you make your threat that you'll never let it come out of Cuba, which is still the key; but the other thing means that you're—

President Kennedy: Well, I would say ground-to-ground missiles, you'd—[42]

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42. Presumably, Robert Kennedy's draft only ruled out the placement of offensive weapon systems on Cuba. Here the President is making clear what he thinks would be unacceptable: ground-to-ground missiles.

Dillon: Well, that's . . . if you want to put it on that maybe—

President Kennedy: Yeah.

Dillon: —that's a strong enough one to put it on, but just saying "offensive weapons," I don't know what an offensive weapon is. They'd argue. Might say tanks are but I don't know.

Bundy: That's a substantive question. I mean how far—it's clear that we want to make a statement that makes it plain that they will be confined and not make a . . . head for the rest of the hemisphere with this stuff.[43]

Rusk: Well, what about this then? "To date, bloc assistance has been limited to weapons normally associated with defense. Were it to be otherwise the greatest questions would arise."[44] [*Unclear*] "Our friends in Latin America and throughout the world [*unclear*] Cuban regime [*unclear*] restricted by whatever means make it necessary to that island." Nothing more . . .

Dillon: That's right, but you don't say you're going to go in there . . .

Bundy: I think that "to that island" is technically not a . . . Ed [Martin] and I have figured out [*Martin makes an unclear interjection*] that you can't keep them out of international waters with their patrol boats. So we're going to have to say, "kept away from any part of the hemisphere."

Rusk: "By whatever means necessary to Cuba."

Martin: We have [had] an alternative plan.

Bundy: [*Unclear*] take that "free passage of the high seas" unless you're going to make a special order.

President Kennedy: Let's see which way that we are in the draft. Now, this first—

Bundy: I think the factual part can be done very well from that first paragraph with the corrections you've made. It doesn't need to be long. Then the question is really whether you want an extensive development, or any development of the Rio Treaty obligations or whether you want to go straight to some form of pledge, either as stated in the Justice draft or anywhere else.

President Kennedy: There's no difference between them.

Robert Kennedy: Do you have another copy of that first factual?

Bundy: No I don't; it's just the one.

Rusk: I think there is some mistake [*unclear*] in the Attorney

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43. Bundy consistently doubts the Soviets would ever use Cuba as a military base from which to threaten the United States.

44. Rusk has hit on a new formulation of the warning to the Soviets. This phrasing would prevail.

General's draft in the middle of page 4 indicating what there is not evidence of . . .

Martin: [*Unclear.*]

President Kennedy: I think we ought to have that and then we ought to—

Bundy: That could follow on—

Rusk: And then the statement on—that reassures our Latin American allies at the end.

Dillon: Well, I think the way you've redrafted it [*unclear*] objection.

President Kennedy: What we are doing is, first we're going to give the details of what assistance they've sent to Cuba.

Bundy: That's right . . . what they have not.

President Kennedy: Secondly, we have . . . And what they have not. Then secondly we are going to give a unilateral guarantee against the use of any of these forces against anyone in the hemisphere.

Bundy: Against anybody else.

President Kennedy: Third, we're going to say that the [*unclear*] indirect methods of taking steps against them [*unclear*] direct. Then I think we ought to say something about, at the end, that we have to keep in mind for those who are . . . This is a dangerous world and we have to keep in mind . . . don't want to use the word *totality* again, but all of the dangers we live with. The fact of the matter is the major danger is the Soviet Union with missiles and nuclear warheads, not Cuba. We don't want to get everybody so fixed on Cuba that they regard . . . So in some way or other we want to suggest that at the end. This is a matter of [*unclear*] danger, as is Berlin as is Southeast Asia as are a great many areas which are—

Bundy: I think there is a question, Mr. President, whether you want to do that in this statement or whether that's something we make clear as we go along.

President Kennedy: Well, I know, I think we've got to say something about that otherwise you don't want everybody to blow on this, you get everybody so mesmerized here that all these other places which are also—

Rusk: I think, perhaps [*unclear*]—

President Kennedy: This is not an aggressive danger to us except indirectly.

Bundy: As it now stands.

President Kennedy: Compared with these other places. Now somewhere we've got to get that in, it seems to me, right from the beginning. Give some guidance.

Dillon: How far do these surface-to-air missiles shoot if they want to use them to hit the ground?

Bundy: Thirty miles.

Dillon: [*Unclear.*]

Pause. Some flipping of pages.

Bundy: Would you like us to go and work on it?

President Kennedy: Haven't similar missiles been given to Iraq and what, the U.A.R. [United Arab Republic of Egypt and Syria]?

Bundy: Similar missiles are on order for Iraq and the U.A.R. and [*unclear*]—

President Kennedy: Indonesia?

Paul Nitze: Indonesia has them, yes sir.

Cline: [*Unclear*] the equipment has been delivered to Indonesia and they are proceeding at a very leisurely pace there and this is the only place that they've set up such a program.

President Kennedy: Do you think it might—

Bundy: This is a quick, smart, secret operation.

Unidentified: That's right.

Bundy: They were put in fast here in Cuba. It is in that sense quite different from their ordinary military assistance. [*Voices of agreement.*]

Rusk: The problem with stating these points you mentioned at the very end, Mr. President is to put [it] in terms of general tensions and the need for making progress on all fronts, to not put it in such a way that it appears that we are timorous about Cuba, because we are scared to death of [*unclear*]—

President Kennedy: No, but what I just want to get everybody to keep in mind, what is really—

Rusk: Right.

President Kennedy: —dangerous, and what's really annoying—

Nitze: At some stage wouldn't it be wise, Mr. President, to lay the background as to why this isn't symmetrical, why that it's the Russians who are really threatening people all over the world? Our measures are defensive mainly. We feel differently. Whereas the Russians have come in with a real aggressive phase. [*Unclear.*] Because otherwise you get on this tit-for-tat kind of a thing, justification where you have to understand time lines.

Bundy: Have you got [*unclear*] language Mr. Secretary as to what we figure will be the consequences? Because that's— [*Unclear response.*]

President Kennedy: Yeah, well I think we ought to . . . do we characterize this as an announcement [*unclear*] aggressive regime?

Papers rustling. Dillon is speaking to someone in the background.

President Kennedy: All right. Now let's see. We've got this first page [*unclear*].

Robert Kennedy: [*Unclear.*]

Bundy: The first paragraph, it's on—there it is, Bobby.

President Kennedy: Now, the question, I don't [*unclear*]—

Bundy: Then we would add the paragraph from page 4—

Rusk: [*Unclear.*]

Bundy: Of Bobby's draft, the middle paragraph, "no evidence of," except I would suggest that we omit the last sentence. That seems to me—

President Kennedy: I've taken that out.

Bundy: —entirely a question of their faith.

President Kennedy: All right, now what do we say after this?

Bundy: And after that we would move toward . . .

Rusk: I would say what comes below, we're going to have to revise. The use of [*unclear*].

Bundy: "I say to our friends in Latin America and throughout the world."

President Kennedy: [*Unclear*] grandiloquent thing, that's an oratorical phrase?

Rusk: Well, "Our friends in—"

Bundy: "I can assure our friends in Latin America"?

President Kennedy: Let's just say, "The armed strength [*unclear*] in Latin America."

Bundy: Or "whatever armed strength." All right. And say not "to that island," I would think . . .

President Kennedy: Well, I think that gets over the idea we have [*unclear*].

Martin: [*Unclear*] precious distinction.

Kennedy and Unidentified: What?

Martin: The high seas is a precious distinction in [*unclear*] statement.

Bundy: Well, it's an important one because the question will come up when they begin using the high seas with MTBs [motor-torpedo boats] as to whether the President has committed himself to prevent that. I would be sorry to see him in that bind.

Brief, unclear exchange. President Kennedy at one point says, "What?"

Inaudible.

President Kennedy: Bobby, you rewrite that sentence.

Bundy: I would say . . .

Rusk: Maybe you rewrite that sentence and let's take the last sentence that [*unclear*]—

Bundy: Well, I think it's important to say. Look, we put in another draft—I admit that it's not as eloquent language—"will be prevented by whatever means might be necessary from threatening any part of the hemisphere."[45]

President Kennedy: OK.

Martin: Seems to me that gets the point across.

President Kennedy: All right. "Threatening militarily . . ." They're threatening every part of the hemisphere now in the indirect sense, so that we're talking now about the military—

Bundy: "Prevented from action against any part of the hemisphere."

Unidentified: "Any action against—"

President Kennedy and several others: "Military action."

Unidentified: "Military action against."

President Kennedy: Yeah.

Rusk: And in the final sentence where . . . here we will have to write a sentence to relate this to other problems [*unclear*].

Bundy: You have one other sentence though about grave damage, which danger, which we need a decision either for or against.

Rusk: Start the paragraph: "To date, bloc assistance has been limited to weapons normally associated with defense. Were it to be otherwise, the greatest questions would arise. The armed strength which the Cuban regime may develop will be restricted by whatever means." For sure.

President Kennedy: See, the reason we've got to put in something at the end, otherwise you're going to get a suggestion of blockade right now and blockade these shipments and . . . so that I think we better just—[46]

Bundy: Well, we could say simply, "Against the real dangers which confront the world, the current threat of, the current hazards in Cuba are not—"

Unidentified: "Kept in pers—"

Bundy: "Must be kept in perspective."

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45. This less than eloquent phrase makes its way into the final version of the statement.

46. The President is seeking more policy flexibility than would have been allowed by a strident statement. The sentence about restricting or confining Cuban power never makes it into the final version. Instead the Cuban problem is set within the complex of concerns defining the worldwide struggle against Communism.

Unidentified: "Perspective."

President Kennedy: "The dangers which confront the world in . . ."

Unidentified: [*Unclear.*]

Bundy: Well, I would . . . I don't know that I'd localize it, at all. "Which Soviet—"

President Kennedy: "Communist." "Communist."

Bundy: "With which Communist aggression threatens the wor—Communist aggressiveness," I would say, "threatens the world."

President Kennedy: "And the peace."

Long pause, with the sounds of writing and page turning. Several unclear, whispered exchanges. Someone says "statement of the general threat."

Robert Kennedy: [*Unclear.*] Read that [*unclear*].

Rusk: [*reading*] "The Cuban ques—"[*unclear*] "The Cuban question must be considered as part of a worldwide challenge posed by Communist threats to the peace and must be dealt with as a part of that larger issue in which all free men have a prominent stake." It gets the idea without—[47]

Bundy: Without [*unclear*] either way. It's very clear.

Robert Kennedy: We might put that at the beginning, I think, of the first paragraph, rather than at the end where we say [*unclear*] happen [*unclear*]. Might be well to have this right under . . . when we get into a discussion of this whole problem.

Unidentified: After the factual statement.

Bundy: That's probably going to be the second paragraph.

Unidentified: After the factual statement.

Bundy: But before we . . . the defense [*unclear*] . . .

Unidentified: [*Unclear.*] All right, [*unclear*].

Bundy: But before we say there is no defensive [*unclear*] I would think . . . Let's put this together in detachable fragments [*unclear*]. [*Unclear exchange. Someone says,* "Time is running out."]

President Kennedy: Five, yeah.

Robert Kennedy: Can we head up there before that? [*Unclear*] take it up now?

Bundy: Well, we'll do our best.

President Kennedy: Here's . . I don't know what—You've got Bobby's haven't you?

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47. Here Rusk was expressing President Kennedy's point that Cuba must be kept in perspective, since the real concern was the Soviet Union and the most acute dangers were in other parts of the world. This language would also be part of the final version.

Bundy: Yeah.

President Kennedy: What about this business of Guantánamo? [*Unclear.*]

Robert Kennedy: Here at the end.

Bundy: I swiped it out.[48]

Unidentified: Yeah. I think that . . .

Unidentified: [*Unclear.*]

President Kennedy: Yeah, we ought to have a sentence in there "as any further . . . as further information is received and verified—"

Bundy: "It will be promptly made available."

President Kennedy: "In accordance with the President's statement a week ago."[49]

Robert Kennedy: That's almost covered in that first page.

Bundy: It's in one of the papers. I think we did get this.

Robert Kennedy: Mac, you might look at the first page.

Unidentified: [*Unclear.*]

Bundy: Well . . . the [Central Intelligence] agency has a brief of what they plan to do, Mr. President, which you may want to review before the . . .

Rusk: "As further information is developed and confirmed."[50]

Carter: Would you prefer to look at it or . . .

President Kennedy: What's this on?

Carter: This is substantially what we gained in this morning, Mr. President, except—

President Kennedy: Oh about the . . . I'd like to ask General [Curtis] LeMay a little about what these SAM sites could mean if we were going to carry out an attack on Cuba. What hazard would this present to you?[51]

Curtis LeMay: Well, it would mean you'd have to get, of course, your force in there to knock them out so that the rest of the attacking forces would be free to take on the other targets. That'd be the first thing we'd do. We'd have to go in low level and get them.

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48. Guantánamo would be mentioned in the final text.

49. Presumably referring to his news conference on 29 August 1962 where he addressed the issue.

50. This becomes the language of the final draft; but just before Salinger reads the statement, the President has this rewritten so that it is clear that he has consistently promised to provide information as "it is obtained and properly verified." Understandably, the President is concerned about his personal credibility. Compare the news conference version to the "last draft," 4 September 1962, "Cuba" folder, National Security Files, Box 36, John F. Kennedy Library. Besides this change, Salinger provided additional information at the press conference on the range of the SAMs. Otherwise, the statement as read and this so-called last draft found in McGeorge Bundy's Cuba file are identical.

51. On 7 September, Kennedy would order military planning for assaults on SAM sites.

President Kennedy: OK.

LeMay: These missiles have no low-level capability so you go in low and take them out.

President Kennedy: You'd have to go hit the radar?

LeMay: And the missiles, too.

Unidentified: [*Unclear.*]

President Kennedy: Would that be a difficult operation?

LeMay: No, sir.

Rusk: They would probably have low-level, smaller antiaircraft guns.

LeMay: Lose our tactical fighters going in low, uh, huh.

Rusk: Yeah.

President Kennedy: You mean they would use antiaircraft [guns]?

Rusk: They would use 20 mm [*unclear*]—

LeMay: Well, they would probably not see us until we got within a few miles of the coastline.

Rusk: Yeah.

LeMay: And you'd put part of your force on those missiles to knock them out.

Rusk: Right.

LeMay: Of course, you've got to get the airfields very quick too.

Rusk: Sure.

LeMay: But this complicates any assault plans you might have. It's another target you've got to worry about.

President Kennedy: Yeah. How about . . . let's see . . . how are we now . . . are we going to continue our observation of the island?

Unidentified: [*Unclear.*]

Carter: We have not yet faced that problem, sir. We have a bird ready to go tomorrow morning and we would like to send it to cover that portion which was obstructed by clouds on the [August] 29th mission. We could go in across the Isle of Pines—hit the two—[*pointing to a map*] hit right there on the first of the green sites and then cover the island down and back, avoiding the present area. We don't need any more coverage of that area now.[52]

President Kennedy: This would be about 75,000 feet, would it, depending?

LeMay: Sixty-five [thousand], 70,000 feet, yes sir.

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52. A U-2 photographed the central and eastern portions of Cuba on September 5. The mission detected three additional SAM sites in the central portion of the island. Heavy cloud cover prevented the U-2 from seeing much along the eastern side of the island. "U-2

Carter: I think that's a safe operation. But I think also it's safe for the entire island now, but next week it may not be and it might not be now.

President Kennedy: He has to go over land doesn't he, to get this thing, these [*unclear*]?

Carter: Yes sir, these are verticals.[53]

LeMay: Well, once these things become operational they have the capability of shooting a U-2 down, of course. We can go to the low altitude 101s, but [*unclear*].[54]

President Kennedy: You can't get much, can you?

LeMay: You can't hide them very well.

President Kennedy: You don't get much I suppose either, do you?

LeMay: Well, you'd get the definite targets you're looking for. You'd have to cover a big wide area. You need more sorties to do that. The specific areas you're interested in, you could [*unclear*].

President Kennedy: So the question really is the hazards to this flight tomorrow.

LeMay: Yes, sir.

Carter: I think the hazard would be very, very slight and we would like to go ahead with it, sir.

President Kennedy: It's fine with me. Do you have any?

Robert McNamara: I think we definitely should go ahead, Mr. President.

Bundy: I would agree.

President Kennedy: Fine.

Now, that would be about—after that it would probably get more difficult. So what are we going to do then? We ought to go, at least—I know it'd seem abrupt so let's be thinking about what [*unclear*]. There's no way we can do this . . .

Thirty-three seconds excised as classified information.

Cline: This flight tomorrow, ought to give us complete coverage of the island and I think we would assess that and perhaps suggest we do an open flight or a . . . that it is safe for another major flight based on [*unclear*].

Carter: Of course, you'll get noise from the 101s [if President

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Overflights of Cuba, 29 August through 14 October 1962," 27 February 1963, in *CIA Documents,* McAuliffe, pp. 127–37.

53. Vertical photography was taken from directly overhead, rather than at an angle, pointed inland from a flight along Cuba's periphery.

54. The McDonnell RF-101 Voodoo was the world's first supersonic photoreconnaissance aircraft. Originally built as a fighter-interceptor, it was a highly maneuverable, low-altitude reconnaissance plane.

Kennedy adds low-level surveillance flights] but you're going to get noise no matter what happens anywhere.

President Kennedy: OK, why don't we stand down for a meeting at five. Now, on this meeting at five certainly one of the questions that is going to come up is this question of our ability or inability to get our NATO allies to do anything about their ships carrying this stuff. That would be addressed to you, Mr. Secretary [*unclear*].

Rusk: Yes, and I will comment briefly on that, that it's not very promising at this point. We've taken it up with them again. But . . . to explain some of the difficulties, but that's not very helpful.

Carter: Does the opening sentence adequately take care of your injunction [*unclear*] Mr. President?

President Kennedy: This is what you might read?

Carter: Yes, sir, this is what we'll give them.

President Kennedy: Yeah, that's fine. I think that's right. I think the . . . just what the facts are which is just that . . . [*Loud paper rustling.*]

President Kennedy: At the meeting then, I think I'll ask that you, General [Carter], to just brief on . . . go over that part of the material which has been made available previously and then this recent material . . . if you want to comment . . . and then [turn to] the Secretary of Defense and General LeMay will then be asked about the military significance of this. Also they'll talk about Guantánamo. Now, if they want to talk about this question of Guantánamo, you should respond—

McNamara: Yes, I talked to Admiral [George W.] Anderson this afternoon, Mr. President, and he recommended that we maintain the present forces at the present levels, unless we observe, by various means, reinforcements of Cuban military personnel in the area.[55]

President Kennedy: Now, this statement of Bundy's is—I wonder if at this meeting the personnel we'll want here will be Secretary of . . . the CIA, Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, General LeMay, and Mr. Nitze. I wonder if the other gentlemen could perhaps go into my office and take a look at this statement [*unclear*] as soon as Bundy has it ready and then see if you fellows could come to a conclusion on it and then if we get it all straightened out, then I will have the Secretary of State and Defense take a look at it and we'll put it out right about six.

President Kennedy: Why don't we all wait in . . .

The meeting breaks up. Only fragments of conversation can be made out.

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55. Admiral George W. Anderson, Jr., was Chief of Naval Operations.

Bundy: Mr. President walk into [*unclear*]. [*Bundy keeps mumbling.*] [*Papers shuffling.*]

McNamara: [*Unclear.*] I don't have [*unclear*]. Yes, I think so. It seems to me [*unclear*]. I'm not sure we [*unclear*].

Bundy: How much do we want?[56]

Robert Kennedy: [*Unclear.*]

McNamara: All right.

President Kennedy: [*Unclear.*] How much do we want?

McNamara: I would recommend . . . Last time you had 250,000 for 11 months. I'd recommend 150,000 for say 5 months, up to the first of March, end of February. [*Unclear.*] Worked out fine [*unclear*] in effect while they're out of session. [*Unclear.*]

President Kennedy: Fine.

Unidentified: And I think we did a good job [*unclear*].

Nitze: I appreciate your help. [*He laughs.*]

Unclear exchanges. Meeting has broken up.

McNamara: Could I just ask, Mr. President, whether you want to raise [*unclear*] question with the [congressional] leadership [*unclear*]. I agree with [*unclear*], the surface-to-air missiles should not represent the stage at which our traditional strength [*unclear*] putting nuclear weapons there as a deterrent actually makes Cuba more [*unclear*] recognizable deterrent.

Unidentified: They could put some more strength there [*unclear*] concentration of artillery [*unclear*].

Unidentified: We've got [*unclear*].

Nitze: You have an appointment to see Foy Kohler at five?[57]

McNamara: Yeah, would you call him? Thank you very much. It may be too late but at least. But she may have already done it.

Dean Rusk had a barely audible conversation with someone before the congressmen arrive. The Secretary of State then, it seems, left the room, but Robert McNamara stayed behind to greet the congressmen.

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56. The discussion has shifted to the call-up of reserves that Kennedy believes is necessary to prepare the U.S. armed forces for any contingency in the rough patch ahead.

57. Foy D. Kohler would replace Llewellyn E. Thompson, Jr., as U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union on 27 September 1962.

5:00–5:55 P.M.

. . . I think Berlin is coming to some kind of a climax this fall, one way or another, before Christmas. And I think that today I would think it would be a mistake for us to talk about military action or a blockade [against Cuba].

Meeting with Congressional Leadership on Cuba[58]

The Attorney General and McGeorge Bundy moved to the Oval Office to complete work on the President's Cuba statement, as the congressional leadership filed into the Cabinet Room. Earlier in the day, the White House invited 20 people to attend, including Speaker of the House John McCormack of Massachusetts, Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield of Montana, and Vice President Lyndon Johnson.[59]

Robert McNamara was in the Cabinet Room as the congressmen arrived. At the tail end of the drafting meeting he had mentioned to the President that a call-up of reserves might be needed during the forthcoming congressional recess. As the congressmen took their seats around the Cabinet table, McNamara isolated a key congressional player to put in a word about the administration's pressing military need.

Robert McNamara: [*quietly as an aside to an unidentified congressman, perhaps Senator Russell*] Well, I think the President wants to tell you what he knew of it. While you're standing here, may I mention that [*unclear*] possibility of obtaining authority [to] call up reserve [*unclear*] personnel while Congress is out of session.[60] He can't do it. The old

58. Including President Kennedy, Senators Everett Dirksen, J. W. Fulbright, Bourke Hickenlooper, Mike Mansfield, Richard B. Russell, and Alexander Wiley; Congressmen Charles A. Halleck, John McCormack, and Carl Vinson; Marshall Carter, Curtis LeMay, Robert McNamara, and Dean Rusk, all identified in the discussion. Senators Thomas H. Kuchel and John Sparkman and Congressmen Carl Albert, Leslie C. Arends, Robert B. Chiperfield, and Armistead Selden are listed on the President's appointments diary but not identified as speakers. Tape 19, John F. Kennedy Library, President's Office Files, Presidential Recordings Collection.

59. Sometime later, Senator John Sparkman of Alabama was added to the list of invitees. According to a note to the President's appointments secretary Kenneth O'Donnell, Vice President Lyndon Johnson, Senators Hubert Humphrey, George Smathers, and Leverett Saltonstall and Congressmen Hale Boggs and Thomas Morgan could not attend.

60. The 87th Congress adjourned on 14 October 1962 and the 88th Congress convened on 10 January 1963.

[*unclear*] expired on the first of August [*unclear*] the resolution . . . or rather on May—yeah, the first of August the resolution was passed. In theory . . . that authority . . . again, unless he declares a national emergency which is [*unclear*] impossible to ask Congress. Now this, however, is likely to cause controversy because of this [*unclear*]. It certainly would be the wrong thing to ask for. We are united as a nation at this time. [*Unclear*] I don't think so [*unclear*]. Well, it's Cuba, Berlin, and Southeast Asia, all the [*unclear*]. No. No sir, I do not. [*Unclear.*] I wouldn't anticipate [*unclear*] requirement. [*Unclear.*] The authority shows, our purpose and firmness of will. You know, we've asked for it only for a period while Congress is out of session until the end of February, from the 1st of October to the end of February. We could have it [*unclear*]. This bill was passed [*unclear*].

While McNamara has this private conversation, the number of congressmen and the voice level in the Cabinet Room rises significantly.

John McCormack: [*Unclear*] resolution on the holidays. Is that right, Ev?

Everett Dirksen: Yeah.

McCormack: Constitution Day.

Dirksen: How many more of these [*unclear*] are going to come? [*Unclear exchanges and greetings.*]

Unidentified: They're not all here, Mr President. They're not all here yet. [*Unclear exchange.*]

President Kennedy: General, why don't you come in and sit over there. [*Whispered exchanges.*]

Dirksen: Oh, we are having fun—

President Kennedy: I know you're having fun, but—

Dirksen: I invited you to come up to the battleground if you run out of [*unclear*]. [*Laughter.*]

Richard Russell: It's at the country's expense Mr. President. I can assure you of that.

President Kennedy: [*Unclear.*]

Dirksen: The last thing was [Senator Paul] Douglas trying to knock the lobbying sections out of the bill. John Cooper came along and got it all bitched up, then they had 15 parliamentary inquiries and as of this moment, nobody knows what he voted on.[61] But he voted on something.

Alexander Wiley: Mike, you come over here. Come on. [*Whispered exchanges.*]

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61. John Sherman Cooper was a Republican senator from Kentucky.

Unidentified: [*Unclear.*]

Unidentified: All the big shots should be at the table, not the little shots today. [*Unclear exchanges.*]

Unidentified: Pull up a chair.

Unidentified: You sit back there thinking that you'll have people thinking that pipe as far away from everybody as possible. [*Unclear exchanges.*]

President Kennedy: Just wait just a minute. Alex. [*Unclear.*]

Unidentified: [*Unclear.*]

Unidentified: [*Unclear*] California.

Unidentified: He's in California.

Unidentified: Oh, he's in California?

Unidentified: Back tonight. I saw Fulbright was in town.

President Kennedy: That singing group from Arkansas here this morning was fantastic . . . [*unclear*] group from the University of Arkansas [*unclear*] won that prize with forty other countries at singing medieval church music.

Charles Halleck: Is that the group that all the singing experts said was no good? [*Several voices agree. Laughter.*] [*Unclear.*]

President Kennedy: [That] shows you you can't believe everything [*unclear*].

Unidentified: It just proves . . .

Russell: In my opinion I thought the . . .

Unidentified: Huh?

Russell: In my opinion the Italians loved it. [*Unclear exchange.*]

President Kennedy: I think we're . . . I think we're starting anyway.

This meeting is to give the leadership the latest information we have on Cuba. Perhaps General Carter, who is executive director of the Central Intelligence Agency, who is representing the intelligence community today in Mr. McCone's absence, will lead off with first what we had up till Friday, then the information we got this weekend.[62]

Marshall Carter: Up until Friday of last week we've had considerable indications—in fact, firm indications—of Soviet shipping up to as many as forty ships having come into Cuba since mid-July. Spasmodic reports, many from refugees and from some defectors indicating the type of equipment, but nothing on which we could really pin a confirmation.

New sources, highly reliable, new information that has just come in over this last weekend now gives us clear confirmation of exactly what

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62. McCone was on his honeymoon at Cap Ferrat, on the French Riviera.

the Soviets have been putting in, in recent weeks. We have surface-to-air missiles, some artillery, and some motor torpedo boats with missile launchers.

I'd like to go into the details of exactly what this equipment is that we have been able to confirm. They are now building, on the island of Cuba, eight surface-to-air missile sites, one probable assembly area just south of Havana and two additional sites, one on the far eastern side of Cuba.

I'd like to show you these on the map here. There has been very little permanent construction at these sites, indicating that they are going in on a crash basis and yet they could be operational, some of them, within a week. It takes a minimum of 125 technically trained personnel to operate one of these sites and to the best of our knowledge, no Cubans have been receiving this technical training. This excludes the security personnel and administrative personnel required to operate a site. The sites on the western slope of Cuba, eight of them, cover the entire third of the island. Just below Havana is what appears to be an assembly area from the information we are getting, and in the far right, we have here an indication of an additional site. Each of these sites has a central radar and normally six launchers, each normally having a missile. They are exactly the type of equipment that the Soviets utilize in Russia and is known as their [NATO designation] SA-2. It has characteristics somewhat better than the Nike Ajax, not as good as the Nike Hercules. Its horizontal range is 25 to 30 miles, its altitude capability 60[,000] to 80,000 feet with one system, 80,000 to 100,000 feet with an improved system. We have not received information as to which of the systems they are putting in. Low altitude capability is about 2,500 feet and the maximum operational area for these missiles; the best capabilities are between 10,000 and 60,000 feet. It appears that there will be additional surface-to-air missile sites put in subsequently.

Now further defector and clandestine reports from the central province indicate that at least two sites will be located there—I've put them in in green—but we have not received any confirming information on those. The pattern now is emerging that would indicate approximately 24 sites in total would cover the entire island of Cuba.

In addition to the surface-to-air missile sites that are being put in, we have confirmed reports on eight Komar-type missile-launching motor torpedo boats. These have an operational radius of about 300 miles at a speed of 45 knots. Each of the boats has two missile launchers, but these launchers are not reloadable, so that they must go back to shore or to a mother ship to get new loads. They are radar-guided missiles and they

have an effective range of between 15 and 17 miles. It carries a 2,000-pound high-explosive warhead. This is a conventional type of missile-launching motor-torpedo boat such as the Soviets utilize in their waters. Some Cuban naval personnel have received training in the Soviet Union but we do not know whether or not they were trained on the Komar-type boat. These are in addition to the 13 motor-torpedo boats and the six submarine chasers that we had reported earlier this year.

These same highly reliable sources indicate that current shipments also include some additional army-type armaments such as tanks and armored personnel carriers, possibly also some combat aircraft. We now credit the Cubans with having 60 MiG fighters operational including at least a dozen MiG 19s. There is no report on any MiG 21s or of any bombers.

Soviet shipments of military equipment continue to show no signs of letting up. There are about 16 Soviet dry cargo ships now en route to Cuba and we estimate at least ten of them are probably carrying military equipment. Total numbers of military and military-related shipments to Cuba since mid-July approximate 65 vessels. The routine shipments of Soviet goods continue mainly in Western bottoms.[63] At least 1,700 Soviet military technicians have arrived in Cuba in late July and early August. Bloc military personnel, as you know, first began arriving in Cuba in mid-1960 and up until this most recent influx, we have been carrying about 500 military-type technicians, several thousand agricultural and economic type. Thirteen hundred military-type technicians have just recently arrived and we estimate now from 3,000 to 3,500 military technicians on the island of Cuba. We would anticipate that additional Soviet technicians, both military and economic, would be coming in these subsequent shipments.

That concludes the present situation as we were able to confirm it just this past weekend from, what I say, are very reliable sources, Mr. President.

President Kennedy: Questions, gentlemen?

Russell: How many of these missile torpedo boats did you say they had?

Carter: There are eight of them there, sir, now.

Hickenlooper: Are they water to water, water to air?

Carter: Water to water, short range, highly accurate, however, or reasonably accurate. The . . .

Hickenlooper: Not subject to water to air?

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63. Ships registered in non-Communist countries.

Carter: No sir. We give them an estimated probable error [in accuracy] of about 100 feet.

President Kennedy: At how many miles? At 15 miles?

Carter: At 15 miles, yes, sir.

President Kennedy: We would hope to have the rest of the information in a very short while about other sites on the rest of this island [*unclear*].

Carter: Yes sir, we are seeking out information from the eastern portion of the island. And as it comes in through various sources we will collate it and I would hope by next week or within the next ten days we would have any new developments in that area.

Halleck: Mr. President, I wonder if I could ask something?

President Kennedy: Yeah, shoot.

Halleck: Do you consider this a defensive operation or force, or an offensive [operation]?

Carter: Well, there are no indications of any offensive weapons right now, sir. These weapons are defensive.

At least, the surface-to-air missiles are. The interpretation as to tanks or armored personnel carriers—since they are on the island . . . I think we'd better revert to the Department of Defense to make that analysis. The motor-torpedo boats, well they are . . . I think I'm not competent to comment on that, sir. General LeMay [would be] better. I would say they are either defensive or offensive depending upon how they are used.

Curtis LeMay: I don't think these torpedo boats have offensive capability. I think [*unclear*] defensive buildup.

President Kennedy: [*whispering*] Did he just say "defensive"?

Unidentified: Yes, sir.

Russell: Doesn't matter what you say, Mr. General, if they would decide to kick us out of Guantánamo, every bit of this stuff could be offensive. They could bring their artillery and then put them in those hills back of Guantánamo and run us out. Then we do what?

Unidentified: I would think they'd be [used] mainly against other Latin American countries.

Russell: Oh, against it, yes.

Hickenlooper: Mr. President, is there any buildup or threat against Guantánamo at the moment? I mean indication of movement or concentration?

Carter: No sir. Normal harassment that takes place all the time, sir, but nothing . . . no real indication.

President Kennedy: Might just say something about Guantánamo.

Dean Rusk: Well, they seem to be staying very much at arm's length from Guantánamo, with any significant forces, [*unclear*] moving some forces.

President Kennedy: The Secretary of Defense wants to say something about Guantánamo, what we got there?

McNamara: Yes, Mr. President. We have relatively light forces there at the present time, approximately 1,500 men including about 400 sailors who have been trained for ground combat.

An attack on Guantánamo would have to be met with forces from the United States, forces which are available, which are on alert, fighter aircraft and airborne troops. [*Unclear background conversation.*]

Hickenlooper: Mr. President, may I ask if—is there any stepped-up activity on the part of Soviet submarines in the Caribbean waters, the Gulf [of Mexico], around that area, the shipping lanes?

Carter: No, sir. At least we have no indication of it, sir.

Hickenlooper: Well, I said stepped-up activity. There probably is some activity around in there.

Carter: Very, very slight, in that area, sir. And very spasmodic.

Hickenlooper: Thank you.

Rusk: There's been a surprisingly small amount of submarine activity in the Atlantic area by the Soviets.

Russell: Mr. Secretary, you remember how many dollars they get each year out of Guantánamo, their employees there?

Rusk: They have 3,200 Cuban employees, of whom 1,000 live on the base. So that means about 2,200 go back and forth every day.

McNamara: They might get something on the order of seven million dollars a year perhaps. There are roughly 3,500 employees involved.

Russell: They're requiring these people to turn in their dollars too, aren't they?

McNamara: Yes.

Rusk: So far as we know, there's been no systematic attempt to harass the workers on the base, nor has there been any interference with the water supply there. They run a regular check on the water supply.

Halleck: Are the Cuban workers permitted to buy at the PX on the base at Guantánamo and then go off base with their purchases, back into Cuba, such as medicines, luxuries, this that and the other thing?

McNamara: I don't believe so, but I can't answer for certain. [*Pause.*]

Russell: [*Unclear.*]

President Kennedy: [*to Rusk*] Do you want to say anything?

Rusk: Mr. President, I might just comment on two points on the political side. One, the attitude of the other American states and the effect

of this on them. We do believe that this will give much further impetus to the motion that started in the hemisphere about a year ago. We detect a deeper concern in what's happening in Cuba. You will recall that at the last Punta del Este Conference in January, this hemisphere showed considerable movement in rejecting Castro as a solution to the hemispheric problems and unanimously condemned this regime in Cuba as a Marxist-Leninist government and—with not in all of the cases unanimity—took a number of actions that moved toward hemispheric solidarity.

Since that time, the Argentine government was in fact overthrown over this issue, the Frondizi government, and this attitude toward Castro is one of the key sources of present tensions in Brazil where the reaction to Castro has been getting stronger.[64]

In the case of Mexico, if I can make this very much on an off-the-record basis, we do get more help from Mexico, privately, underneath the scenes, than they are willing to confess publicly or make any noise about. They've got a political problem there.

But I think we can count on growing, rather than diminishing solidarity in the hemisphere, in response or in the face of this continued buildup of arms in Cuba.

Now, on the other side of that, it seems that it's necessary for us—we have done this in a number of ways privately and the President has thought about the public aspect of it—we've got to make it very clear to all of our friends in the hemisphere that these Cuban armed forces aren't going anywhere. They're not a threat by force of arms to the other countries of the hemisphere.

Now, you'll be interested that we've—actually the special security measures established at the Punta del Este Conference as an instrument of the OAS . . .[65] We've gone to extraordinary effort to try to catch the Cubans actually smuggling arms or putting in bands in countries around the Caribbean, and thus far we haven't been able to turn up very much. The principal effort that the Communists are making in Latin America seems now to be money, and the training of young people as potential agents, training these Cubans. But we haven't been able to catch any of this illicit traffic in arms that we were hoping to intercept [*unclear*] the Punta del Este Conference. They seem to be playing a cautious game on things of that sort.

Now, in the NATO framework, we have been trying to get our

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64. The Argentine government under Arturo Frondizi was overthrown on 29 March 1962.
65. Organization of American States.

NATO allies to take a harder look at this Cuban problem than they have thus far been willing to do. We've made some progress, but not nearly enough in our estimate.

In the case of Canada, their trade with Cuba in 1961, [was] on the order of 35 or 40 million dollars. This year it will be on the order of six or seven million dollars. Part of that is because Canada is forbidding any reexport of anything from the United States to Cuba. They are applying the COCOM list to Cuba and it cuts off quite a number of things and also, our own embargo on Cuba has deprived Cuba of dollars that they might use to buy large quantities of foodstuffs and things of that sort from Canada. So it's partly action by Canada, partly because the Cubans haven't got any dollars.

We are very much concerned about the use of free world shipping in the Cuba trade.[66] But this is a very, very difficult problem to deal with, because there is such a vast supply of shipping and a surplus of shipping for normal trade these days, that the customary arrangements with the Soviet bloc [are] bare-bones charters, without specifically identifying them for the Cuba trade. A very small percentage of the tonnage available in fact goes into the Cuba trade, something like 1 percent, 2 percent, in that order of magnitude. A number of the NATO countries claim that they do not have the legal authority to move without having parliamentary action similar to our Trading with the Enemy Act. But, in any event, since their problem would be to break trading relations with the Soviet bloc as a whole, as far as shipping is concerned . . . Countries like Norway, U.K., Greece, that have a heavy reliance upon their shipping services for foreign exchange for their own necessities, would find it very difficult to do that in specific relation to Cuba. Nevertheless, we are talking about this development with our NATO allies and hope very much that they can find some way to put pressures on those shippers who are in fact taking an active part in the Cuba trade. But it is a difficult one because of the vast surpluses of shipping and the nature of the charters that are normally used in the trade that get diverted or turned away into the actual Cuban part of it.

Dirksen: What flag is predominant would you say?

Rusk: It varies: U.K., Norway, Greece.

Unidentified: Portugal.

Rusk: Portugal slightly, Italy slightly. And—

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66. Referring to recent press reports that the demand for shipping between the Soviet Union and Cuba was so high that vessels registered in NATO member countries were being used.

President Kennedy: West Germany.

Rusk: Yugoslavia and West Germany, all of them are involved with it.

Russell: Mr. Secretary, you . . . speaking of the Mexican cooperation, I was very much concerned last year when I was down there talking to some of our people, particularly [*three seconds excised as classified information*] telling me about these dummy corporations that were shipping parts and replacements to the Cubans to keep their industry going. I understood that practically all of them were American in origin. They were transshipping, the dummy corporations in Mexico to Cuba. And the Canadians are pretty bad about that too. They bought a great deal of parts and replacements [*unclear*] few get rich, the big boys over there. Has that matter been [*unclear*]?

Rusk: We've seen some reduction of that, again partly because of Cuban foreign exchange, which—

Twenty-four seconds excised as classified information.

Russell: The Russians would never let that happen you see. It's got too much nuisance value to . . . They've kept them going.

Rusk: There's practically no trade as such now between Cuba and Latin America, very limited now. The foreign minister of Chile, for example, told me the only thing they sell to Cuba is garlic. And we thought that was probably something we wouldn't worry too much about. [*Some chuckling.*]

Alexander Wiley: Mr. President, may I ask a question? How do you define the question of missile sites? I understood you to say that they were defensive instead of offensive, is that right?

Carter: Yes, sir. These are designed for shooting down aircraft and that's all.

Wiley: Well, now then, the next question is, what is our policy in relation to Cuba? I'm just back from the hinterland and everybody is inquiring about it and I said I'll have to talk to the executive who spearheads foreign policy or the Secretary of State. What is to be our policy? Just to sit still and let Cuba carry on?

President Kennedy: [*Unclear statement.*] On this matter we are going to make an announcement in regard to the existence of these sites today.

We're also going to state that the United States would prevent the use of any of these military weapons, any of this force against any neighboring country, but that this . . . which I have never thought a very likely prospect but at least it has been discussed. Any concern that this buildup, military buildup would be used against another country, another neighbor would be . . . We will indicate that if that were done, the United States would intervene under its Rio Treaty and the Monroe Doctrine and all the rest.

As to whether the United States would intervene in Cuba in order to . . . at this point, I would think it would be a mistake. We're talking about—we have to keep some proportion—we're talking about 60 MiGs, we're talking about some ground-to-air missiles which from the island, which do not threaten the United States. We are not talking about nuclear warheads. We've got a very difficult situation in Berlin. We've got a difficult situation in Southeast Asia and a lot of other places. So that if I were asked, I would say that I could not see, under present conditions, the United States intervening. It would be a major military operation. General LeMay can describe it in more detail. It would be a major military operation.

Wiley: Blockading [*unclear*].[67]

President Kennedy: Well, a blockade is a major military operation, too. It's an act of war. We could blockade . . . there's no evidence that that would bring down Castro for many, many months. You'd have a food situation in which you'd have people starving and all the rest. In addition, Berlin obviously would be blockaded also. And if Berlin were blockaded one of our reprisals obviously could be the actions of various kinds against Cuba. But I would say today . . . listen I think Berlin is coming to some kind of a climax this fall, one way or another, before Christmas. And I think that today I would think it would be a mistake for us to talk about military action or a blockade [against Cuba]. Blockades are very difficult. It's a big island and you have to stop ships of the Soviet Union and other ships. And it would be regarded as a belligerent act; and it would be regarded as a warlike act. I would think we would have to assume that there would be actions taken against countries. . . . I think that we therefore should not do that. I don't see that the Soviet . . .

This is annoying and it's a danger. I think the dangers to this hemisphere [*unclear*] by Cuba is by subversion and example. There's obviously no military threat, as yet, to the United States. The military threat quite obviously is still the Soviet Union which has missiles and hydrogen bombs.

So that, in answer to your question, I would . . . even though I know a lot of people want to invade Cuba, I would be opposed to it today. So I think we ought to keep very close surveillance on Cuba which we are doing and keep well informed and make it very clear that the placing in Cuba of missiles which could reach the United States would change the nature of the . . . buildup and therefore would change the nature of our response.

Rusk: Mr. President, I think it might be worth commenting that the

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67. Over previous weeks, Wiley had called publicly for a blockade of Cuba.

Soviets have been reluctant to make a flat all-out commitment to Cuba. There is a good deal of information that Castro's famous statement last December that he was an all-out Marxist-Leninist was a statement which seriously annoyed the people in Moscow for two reasons: one was that it exposed him to other people in Latin America. Senator [Bourke] Hickenlooper and Congressman [Armistead] Selden will remember how much of an impression that made at the Punta del Este Conference, for example, and therefore it made him less effective in Latin America.

But secondly, the impression is that he made that statement in order to try to force the hand of the Soviet[s] to make commitments to Cuba that the Soviets weren't ready to make. They have stayed—it's not sure now they're making a flat all-out security commitment to Cuba in this situation and . . . either publicly or privately.

President Kennedy: After all, the United States put missiles in Turkey, which are ground to ground with nuclear warheads. We have to keep some . . . it seems to me we have to weigh our dangers. I would say the biggest danger right now is for Berlin.

Perhaps you want to comment on what happened in Berlin today and . . .

Rusk: Yes, I'd say—

Wiley: May I say, Mr. President, that I think that the majority of the people agree with the conclusions that you've made, that the world is a hot spot and we'd better not make it hotter by any of our own acts.

I got your statement to mean that we'll be ready and willing and able to carry on but we will not, to the slightest degree precipitate, well, a third world war. [*Pause.*]

Hickenlooper: Mr. President.

President Kennedy: Yes.

Hickenlooper: I can see how the present extent of the buildup as reported here poses no military threat of any great significance at this particular moment, physically to the United States. But, the thing that bothers me is the psychological impact on the Latin American countries. Whether or not the continued, reported and established buildups in Cuba of bloc country arms, technicians, people, with inaction here, I'm not suggesting action one way or the other, that isn't part of my discussion. The effect that it has on the Latins, and the argument that we're a paper tiger and the fomenting groups in Latin America say, "See look what's happening 100 miles from the United States. They do nothing about it. The United States is . . . we have nothing to fear, we can spit in their face, we can do this, that, and the other thing." That is, the dissident groups in Latin America which are not diminishing in strength so far as I can find. And it's the psychological impact that bothers me, at least as much if not

more than some of the physical threats, or potential threats that might be involved at the moment. I think it's quite a serious psychological situation in Latin America. Every time it's announced that more Russian troops, people, more Russian technicians, whether they are troops in civilian clothes or whether they are agricultural technicians or whatnot, predominantly it comes out that the more of those that come in . . . more missiles, more weapons, and so on, I'm afraid it gives stimulus to those dissident groups down there which pose an increasing difficulty for us in those countries. I may be wrong but . . .

President Kennedy: I will say that the Soviet Union exercises some restraint in some areas. They haven't after all talked about a peace treaty since 1958 and they haven't raised it.[68] We did as I say put missiles in Turkey with nuclear warheads and they didn't take action. We have engaged in assistance of various kinds to Iran, Pakistan, and other areas. So that I think that we both proceed with some caution because we both [*Hickenlooper tries to interrupt*] realize where the real danger to the countries lies finally, but I quite agree that Cuba is . . .

On the other hand, Senator, I'm not so sure looking at it over the last 12 months whether you'd say that what's happened in Cuba has particularly helped the Communist cause. I would say that there's a lot of things that helped the Communist cause but I think they are more internal in each country and not what's happened to Cuba. I would say that every survey I've seen in the last 12 months shows the sharpest drop in the support of Castro, which was, perhaps since '59.

Hickenlooper: Mr. President, I have noticed in whatever meager and perhaps inaccurate information I get, I think I have noticed a sharp drop over the last year, year and a quarter, in Castro, the popularity of Castro, or the respect for Castro as an individual, or as a leader. But Castroism is a thing that I believe they separate from Castro in their thinking. That is, the idea that you can take from the big fellow, that you can go take and do it with immunity. That you can confiscate, that you can have this, that, and the other thing, which they ally with Castro's movement in Cuba. They know Castro is a Commie, they know he's under Communist domination, but I don't know whether the Spanish say Castroísimo or, what is

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68. President Kennedy is playing down his Khrushchev problem. Khrushchev's 1958 threat to sign a peace treaty with the East German government triggered the 1958 to 1962 Berlin crisis. Although Khrushchev had backed down from following through on this threat in 1959, he had not stopped talking about his readiness to sign a peace treaty. Khrushchev reiterated this threat at the Vienna Summit of June 1961 and again, most recently, in July 1962.

it? Whatever. Anyway, the Castroism in Spanish is a thing that they differentiate as compared to Castro as the individual. I may be wrong about that but that is the impression I get.

Rusk: Mr. President, I think there is no question that the extreme left down there will tend to make some noise about this kind of buildup. I think there is a compensating factor on the other side, Senator. I think that more and more people of the responsible sort are becoming much more sober about Cuba than a year ago. A year ago at Punta del Este, as you know, certain of these countries down there didn't really think about Cuba; they were thinking about their own internal problems and those at a distance from Cuba—Argentina, Brazil, Chile—weren't very helpful at Punta del Este.

Now, there are growing concerns about it. I think there is a more sober approach. And I would have to report [*unclear*] that some of the reactions have been not what ought to be done about Cuba, but to use the Cuban situation as a pretext for saying to us: "Well, now that means, of course, the opportunity presents itself to have more destroyers and more cruisers and things of that sort." And that's as a matter for their own military establishments. It is not really called for at this point [*unclear*] in relation to Cuba. But, I think on balance the development down there has been wholesome, in response to this. [*Unclear.*]

The President asked me to comment for just a moment on what happened in Berlin today. Over the weekend the three allies insisted to the Soviet Union that their guard coming in from Friedrichstrasse to the War Memorial would have to be moved to gates down near the War Memorial to avoid incidents, traffic hazards, provocations that were resulting from their use of the Friedrichstrasse Gate for their armored personnel carriers, carriers that they adopted after the stoning incidents ten days ago. We gave them until this morning to reply because they had to turn around with Moscow.[69]

Hickenlooper: That's the War Memorial at Brandenburg Gate?

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69. An imposing Soviet War Memorial in Berlin had been erected just inside West Berlin, near the Brandenburg Gate. Each day, Soviet soldiers charged with guarding the memorial would travel down Unter den Linden, through the Brandenburg Gate, from East Berlin to West Berlin. Disturbances and instances of harassment from West Berliners, particularly students, had intensified with the recent one-year anniversary of the sealing of West Berlin (13 August) and the killing of an East German, Peter Fechter, as he was trying to cross the Wall and escape to West Berlin. This led the Soviets to transport their soldiers in Armored Personnel Carriers (APCs), creating a difficult issue for the Western powers striving to keep to a minimum the Soviet military presence in West Berlin. By changing the crossing point from the Brandenburg Gate to the Sandkrug Bridge, the Western powers shortened the distance that the Soviet APCs would have to travel through West Berlin.

Rusk: That's correct. So we've just had information from Berlin that the Soviets did accept the Sandkrug Bridge which is just beyond the Brandenburg Gate and is very near the War Memorial. And we were interested and pleased that they responded in that way because they were beginning to build up a position there and we cut that back to the original [*unclear*].

Russell: That's good news.

Short unclear exchange between Rusk and President Kennedy.

Russell: That's good, but one question, Mr. Secretary. You hear all kind of rumors that Castro is becoming more and more of a figurehead, that two of the old-time Communists are running Cuba and he's more or less a front. Is there anything to that?

Rusk: My own reading of our information on that, Senator Russell, is that this is not the case, that it would have, it might have been true perhaps four or five months ago but that Castro, whatever his faults, has been more or less accepted by the Soviet Union as the person who has to be backed even though there is friction between himself and the hard-core, old-time Communist apparatus.[70] Now, I think you do get reports about his heavy drinking and his administrative hopelessness and things of that sort. But we're inclined to believe that the Soviets have agreed to tolerate his "un-Communist" kinds of weaknesses, if you like, because they need his hold on the Cuban people. I suspect, myself, that they'd have much greater difficulty with the Cuban people if Castro were removed and you had the old-line apparatus trying to take over completely.

Dirksen: General Carter, assuming that those sites you pointed out are essentially for defensive purposes, how long would it take to convert them to an offensive facility?

Carter: They're not convertible, sir. You'd have an entirely new installation. The only thing you could use would be the administrative facilities, the buildings and roadways.

Dirksen: What else would they require?

Carter: You'd require launching pads, and an entirely new missile delivery system and missile guidance system, if you are going into a static operation. Now, of course, we do have mobile surface-to-surface missiles in our own inventory and in the Soviet inventory. We have seen no sign of those at all in Cuba.

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70. In March 1962, Castro removed the powerful longtime Cuban Communist leader, Anibal Escalante. On the shake-up in the Cuban leadership see Fursenko and Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble,"* pp. 163–65.

Russell: Is it contemplated that there'd be any change in the flight instructions to any of our planes as a result of the construction of these bases?

Carter: No, sir. This is—

Russell: Or would you know about that? General LeMay, do you know about that? [*A voice is heard indistinctly in the background.*]

Carter: It should not be required.

Russell: Well, we've been getting such information by flying along the shores and all of Cuba and not just by [*unclear*]. I didn't know whether we were going to continue to get that information or whether it'd prevent us from knowing if they did put in an intermediate-range missile base.[71]

Carter: Well, these—

President Kennedy: General, let me just say, this is going to present us with some difficulties of securing information of the type you describe. So that we are now considering what should be the action we would take in order to keep informed about what additional . . .

Russell: [*Unclear.*]

Rusk: I think there is one point the Senator mentioned—

President Kennedy: But there is no doubt that we can't fly low.

Rusk: As far as international waters are concerned, I've already announced this week that we would insist upon our right to use international waters or international airspace for at least the planes.

President Kennedy: What are the—

Russell: Well, we won't go into that.[72]

Carl Vinson: Mr. President, is there any possibility of any more drastic action through the OAS as a result of this arms buildup?

Rusk: I will be talking with the foreign ministers of the OAS and the U.N. assembly in the next—in about ten days' time.[73] We have talked with several of them separately on this general subject. We would like to step up, if we can, the activities of that special security committee.

But thus far, I must say, we've had very little luck in getting hard information about action directed against the other countries in the hemisphere. They tend to think those are the kind of ordinary Communist

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71. The chairman of the Armed Services Committee is asking about the possible consequences of the SAM deployments on U-2 flights over the island.

72. Senator Russell was a member of the smaller group of congressmen who were regularly informed about CIA operations.

73. Rusk met with the Latin American ambassadors the following afternoon, where he proposed an informal meeting of foreign ministers.

techniques of money and training [*unclear*] and things of that sort. Arms, we think they haven't been able to buy. We'd love to catch them.

Russell: The President referred to our responsibilities there to these other countries. Just what would we do if they had an upheaval say in [the] Dominican Republic and the Communists took over there? A handful of Castroites there, perhaps not many. But are we under any more responsibility there to restore some democratic form of government than we are in Cuba?

President Kennedy: Well, I'd say that that is our problem, quite obviously not the military problem, but Haiti is now a [*unclear*] and I would think that the United States should intervene if it appeared that there were going to be a revolt or a coup d'etat in the Dominican Republic that would put Communists in control, then I would think the United States would intervene at that point.

Russell: We moved up, I know, when it looked as if the fallen dictator's family might—

President Kennedy: That's right.

Russell: —move back in. I didn't know whether that . . . of course you've got about as much of a dictator on the other end of the island as there was in Santo Domingo. Duvalier, I think, is [*unclear*].

Unidentified: [*Unclear, but someone mentions Castro.*]

President Kennedy: Yes, I think that obviously Duvalier . . . and we don't know where he's going, but we have to . . . but I would think that if we ever had any others that Castro is taking over, then the United States would with as many other countries as we could, would try to intervene. We have, in the case of [the] Dominican Republic, we had Colombia and Venezuela with us. And I think that we ought to attempt to strengthen our inner OAS arrangements in the Caribbean so that if there is a situation, we can intervene with the support of at least one or two other Caribbean countries at the critical moment.

Hickenlooper: Well, Mr. President, isn't there some evidence that almost all of the Caribbean countries are willing to join in whatever intervention the United States should determine—

President Kennedy: I'm sure with the exception perhaps of Haiti, I'm sure they would.

Hickenlooper: Well, with the exception of Haiti, yes, yes, yes.

President Kennedy: And Mexico, I'm sure they would if they see—

Hickenlooper: Indeed.

President Kennedy: Whether they would join in Guatemala would depend really on the conditions in Guatemala. But I would think if the . . .

There might be a difference of opinion as to the personnel. And we might say someone is Communist which the Venezuelans or someone else might not say. But, I think, if the provocation were clear, I don't think there is a doubt—I don't see anyone who would not support us at this time with the exception of Haiti.

Unidentified: And Mexico.

President Kennedy: I think the problem always is, as it was with Castro, is they come into power as something else, and our information is not complete and therefore we assume that they may be all right. I think that would be our problem with Guatemala. But I—

William Fulbright: Do you—

The President and Senator Fulbright try to speak at the same time.

President Kennedy: No, you go ahead; I'm finished.

Fulbright: Do you feel that this might be a sort of a testing out of our adherence to the Monroe Doctrine, in part?

Rusk: May I comment on that very briefly, Mr. Chairman—Mr. President? I'm inclined to believe that the Cuban development came as a surprise to the Soviets two years ago. They saw in this an opportunity to cause us some difficulty in this hemisphere. They had not planned it quite this way all the way through and that they came aboard with large assistance when it became necessary to support the Castro regime. I don't believe it started out as a probing of the Monroe Doctrine, but I do believe that the attitude we take about the effect of Cuba in the hemisphere is very important in terms of the Monroe Doctrine, in terms of, more importantly at this point, the inter-American defense treaties. To be sure that the Soviets realize that there is suspicion beyond Cuba, that they are in for trouble here . . . and then the Cuban situation has to be looked at in this total context as a threat and so in a given circumstance to see what has to be done at the time.

Russell: Mr. President, this statement to which you refer, you not only refer to these missile sites, but you give all the facts as to the technicians, and . . .

President Kennedy: Yes, but the technician information has been—

Russell: The whole story is being released . . . I think that's a very wise—

President Kennedy: The technician material has been put out before—

Russell: [*Unclear.*]

President Kennedy: —but the missile sites we did not get until Friday and that is being put out to . . . so it's the missile sites— [*Unclear background whispering.*]

Carter: Not in the same degree, Mr. President, as it appears.

Russell: No, it's much later. As I understand from what General Carter says, it's larger than we thought it was when we made this other statement.

President Kennedy: Well, I think we've known for at least two weeks. In the State Department briefing, it seems to me the figure of 3,500 was used, wasn't it?

Rusk: Yes, sir.

Unidentified: [*Unclear*]—

Carter: Three to five thousand, I think.

President Kennedy: Right.

Carter: It's a pretty good fix now at about 5,000 total.

Unidentified: [*Unclear.*]

Unidentified: That includes [*unclear*].

Carter: Yes, sir.

President Kennedy: That's correct. That's right. But, of the 5,000, how many are military?

Carter: At the most, 3,500.

President Kennedy: So there's 3,500, and the others are other kinds of technicians.

Carter: Yes, sir.

Russell: I think it's an [*unclear*] just to give the whole thing out. Let's say MiGs, and armored torpedo boats and old kit and bother nothing. Just throw it out and let the people have it . . . hearsay . . . You have so many rumors, if you don't do it this way . . .

The tape quality deteriorates intermittently over the next few exchanges.

Russell: . . . it's worse than it actually is . . .

President Kennedy: Right. Well, I think we're setting a number—I don't know if we got the torpedo boats in this one. Have we put out the torpedo boats before?

Carter: No, sir.

[*Pause.*]

President Kennedy: Perhaps General LeMay, before we conclude, might just want to say what the military problem is of these sites in case there is ever a military action against Cuba. What it would take—

LeMay: This complicates the military circumstances [*unclear*]. These missiles are not good at altitude [*unclear*] go in underneath their effective altitude and knock them out.

Unidentified: [*Unclear.*]

LeMay: I would [*unclear*] use our strategic force [*unclear*].

Unidentified: No.

LeMay: I see no complications regarding the general operation [*unclear*].

Rusk: [*Unclear.*]

McNamara: [*Unclear.*]

President Kennedy: [*Unclear.*] General, go see if the statement we're going to put out is ready. I might read it to . . .

Background conversation while Rusk is talking is unintelligible.

Rusk: Mr. President, although the forces actually in Guantánamo may appear to be rather light, the capability of these forces on the one side is very heavy. And further, the other side, the Cubans have gone to considerable lengths to make it clear that they don't have intentions of attacking Guantánamo. One of the current jokes around the United Nations is the Cubans [say] "Don't the Americans hope we would attack Guantánamo?" That kind of thing. So, I think, the lightness of the forces in Guantánamo is not necessarily a measure of the situation.

Mansfield: Well, Mr. President, I'd hate for you to lie down, but I think it ought it to be understood that when you issue a statement, and give these facts and figures, that the reaction may well be a call for action of some kind or another. I would hope that this would not be used for the purpose of creating a situation which would tend to undermine your authority and your responsibility. I would hope that we would move with caution and we will not be carried away by these figures and facts that you have given us this afternoon. I think we would have to expect that there will be a certain reaction which may not be very satisfactory.

President Kennedy: Oh, I expect that, but as I say, [*short, unclear aside to someone else*]. All right, as I say we're talking about 58 MiGs, we're talking about some ground-to-air missiles. That really isn't comparable to the threats we face all around. So that I think that's just the perspective we have to keep it in, even though no one would desire more to see Castro thrown out of there; but throwing Castro out of there is a major military operation. It's just a question of when we decide that that's the proper action for us to take. It is an operation which has to be mounted over a period of time and we could anticipate that there would be reactions in other parts of the world, by the Communist bloc against other vulnerable areas as we carve out Cuba. So I think we just have to try to keep all that in perspective.

Mansfield: Well, that's the point—

President Kennedy: There's no easy aspect to throwing Castro out. If we had it, we'd do it. Except an outright military action which involves a great many divisions—a number of divisions—and a great

deal of our military power and I think we've got Berlin, we've got Turkey and Iran . . . We've got southeast Asia, so I—

Unidentified: Formosa also.

Fulbright: Do you think?

President Kennedy: And Formosa.

Fulbright: Do you think, Mr. President, if we did decide to take some firm action about Cuba, that this would turn the pancake over, that this would start Russia off here, there, somewhere else?

Rusk: I think this will lead to a very very severe crisis indeed. I couldn't predict exactly what the Soviets would do but I would think that they would almost certainly make a major move on Berlin of some sort. You remember, the unfortunate combination of Hungary and Suez in 1955 and '6. Now, if on the other side, as the President indicated, the Soviets made a move on Berlin, this opens up some possibilities with Cuba with world support, that we would not have if we at the moment took initiative against Cuba because of circumstances.

Fulbright: This is the other side of the pancake.

Rusk: See, that's the other side of the pancake. Because this is a part of the worldwide confrontation of the free world and the Soviet Union. We have a million men outside the United States as part of this confrontation. All right, this has to be thought of in relation to the whole because you can't deal with these simply as little isolated [*unclear*] instances but the total situation.

Russell: That's undoubtedly true, but Senator Mansfield is right about . . . it may cause a great deal of reaction because this Cuban thing—

President Kennedy: That's right.

Russell: —is in the nature of an offense to the national pride, [*chuckling*] and there's something personal about it too. It's so close down there that . . . a man wouldn't get ruffled about something that happened in Berlin, much less Hungary or some other part of the world, but he would get upset about Cuba.

Unidentified: [*Unclear.*] [*Short pause.*]

President Kennedy: Well, this statement will be out and it won't have any reference to our meeting here but it will be a statement of fact and you've heard the facts as they come along, we'll make available to you. And I would think that if we ever get any information about ground-to-ground missiles then the situation would then be quite changed and we would have to [*unclear*].

Unidentified: Well, thank you, Mr. President.

President Kennedy: Meanwhile we will . . .

Unidentified: Thank you [*unclear*] Senator Russell.

Meeting breaks up.
Unidentified: Mr. Secretary.
Unidentified: Hello, Alex. [*Unclear.*]
Wiley: [*Unclear.*]
McNamara: Yes, I wanted to speak to Senator Russell also [*unclear*].
Unidentified: My greatest friend.
The tape spools out.

At the end of the meeting with the congressional leadership, Robert McNamara, it seems, gathered a few of the congressmen for a short separate meeting with the President to discuss the need for a special grant of standby authority to permit the administration to call-up 150,000 reservists. Kennedy had been considering a call up in August as a response to the increasingly tense situation in West Berlin. His advisers had discouraged him. Now, it seemed that recent events in Cuba could provide another argument for the reserve call-up that Kennedy wanted.

5:55–6:10 P.M.

. . . [D]efinitely say "in view of the developments in Cuba" . . . people understand that . . .

Meeting on the Congressional Resolution about Cuba[74]

For the second time in twenty months, President Kennedy intended to seek congressional authority for special reserve mobilization powers. In mid-1961, following the dramatic Kennedy-Khrushchev summit in Vienna, where the mercurial Soviet leader had vowed to solve once and for all the Berlin problem, Congress approved a call-up as part of a program of expanding defense spending. Now it was the specter of twin crises, in and around Cuba and Berlin, combined with the fact that Congress was about to recess for the midterm elections, that prompted the administration's request.

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74. Including President Kennedy, Everett Dirksen, Lyman Lemnitzer, Robert McNamara, Paul Nitze, Dean Rusk, Richard Russell, and Carl Vinson. Tape 20, John F. Kennedy Library, President's Office Files, Presidential Recordings Collection.

Getting authorization in 1962 was going to be more difficult. In retrospect, the 1961 call-up seemed to have been a mistake. National newspapers and congressional offices received complaints from some of the 150,000 men who had been pulled away from civilian jobs and their families in 1961. Yet despite the unpopularity of the 1961 call-up, the Pentagon had since late July been kicking around drafts of a new congressional reserve authorization. The immediate cause was a new campaign of threats from Moscow, which Khrushchev had launched in the summer by insisting on some kind of resolution of the Berlin tangle after the U.S. midterm elections. For over a month, these drafts had not become policy. Although he shared his advisers' concerns about the implications of Khrushchev's threats to Berlin, President Kennedy was not prepared to push for this authorization until the political climate had improved.

Now, with the Soviets' hurriedly and mysteriously building up Cuban defenses, Kennedy sensed Congress might be prepared to call up reserves to meet an anticipated superpower conflict. A threat from Cuba resonated more than one from Berlin with the American people. With the administration about to make public its statement on the discovery of Soviet defensive surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) in Cuba, it was time to see whether public concerns over Cuba could translate into congressional support for authorization to call up 150,000 reservists in 1962.

As McNamara corralled key congressional leaders, he knew how important it was that this request not meet any significant political opposition. Khrushchev was now in the habit of telling American visitors that democracies would not fight. It was this notion that the administration needed to dispel. For a message of unity and determination to be sent to the Kremlin, any administration request for reserve authorization would have to proceed smoothly and without controversy through Congress.

The time and place of this meeting remain unclear, though all internal evidence points to its having taken place on September 4 after the larger congressional briefing on the Cuba statement. With this smaller group convened, possibly in the Oval Office, the recording began with McNamara's reporting on the results of the 1961 U.S. military buildup and the reasons why more was needed now.

Robert McNamara: The authority that was granted last summer has expired. As you know it covered authority to call up 250,000 men during a period of 11 months and that authority expired with the 1st of July.

Since that authority was granted, we have added about 300,000 men

to the regular forces: roughly 40[,000] to 50,000 men to the Navy, about the same number to the Air Force, and 110[,000] to 120,000 men to the Army. All of the forces are in substantially better shape today than they were on June 30th of last year.

The Army has been expanded in terms of combat-ready divisions by about 45 percent. There were then 11 combat-ready divisions. There are today 16 combat-ready divisions.

The Air Force has had a very substantial expansion in its tactical air strength. A portion of that tactical air strength that has been added, however, is not yet combat ready and won't be combat ready for six to nine months.

The Navy has been expanded by the addition of a large number of amphibious craft as well as logistical support ships.

So, we are much stronger today than we were 13 or 14 months ago when we asked for authority to call up Reserve and Guard personnel.

On the other hand, there are both military and political and psychological reasons why it would be desirable, we believe, to have authority to call up between 150[,000] and 250,000 personnel during the period that Congress is out of session, say roughly from the 1st of October to the end of February. We've been considering that. I just mentioned it briefly, a moment ago, to Chairman [Carl] Vinson and Chairman [Richard] Russell.[75] They mentioned that the House would meet on Friday—

Unidentified: On Thursday.

McNamara: Rather Thursday. We have a draft resolution, essentially the same as the resolution passed a year ago. I think we're all agreed, all of us who have considered this problem, that if there is to be any controversy, any debate, any argument over whether this is a wise move or not, it would be undesirable to submit it to—[*Tape cuts off briefly.*]

President Kennedy: Then [*unclear*] the numbers revised [by] General [Burgess]?

McNamara: Yes, sir. We would.

President Kennedy: But it seems to me quite possible that you would have to call up some air units before the end of the year, if not earlier. Because I think they would be the most likely units we'd call.

We don't have any plans to call up any [National] Guard divisions?

McNamara: No, sir. They . . . If—

President Kennedy: That's why I think the 150 is enough. When it

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75. Respectively, chairmen of the House and Senate Armed Services Committees.

gets beyond that, then we're [*unclear*] crisis more, and after that we draft a [*unclear*].

McNamara: It seems almost certain that any units that were called up during this intervening period between now and, let's say, the end of February could be composed of men who had not been called up within the last year and a half.

President Kennedy: With the exception of the air.

McNamara: Well, even in the air, Mr. President. We have located seven squadrons of fighter aircraft and personnel who were not called to active duty and who would therefore be the squadrons we'd call to reinforce either the U.S. reserve or to move to Western Europe.

And similarly in the Navy we think that, except under most unusual circumstances, we could call the 8[,000] or 10,000 naval reservists that might possibly be needed in the event of blockade and antisubmarine warfare from personnel who had not served within the past year and a half.

In the case of the Army, because of the very substantial increase in armed strength, as I mentioned, a 45 percent increase in the number of combat ready divisions, we see no real requirement for a call-up during this period. But with the possibility that such might be necessary, we would like to have authority to call up a total of at least 150,000 men. Were it necessary to call Army personnel, again personnel could be called who had not served within the past year and a half.

Dean Rusk: Mr. President, if I might just make a very brief comment on the one aspect of this. If the Soviets have been cautious this past year about Berlin in key times, a lot of it was due to the speed and the calm with which the Congress moved last autumn in response to the President's request for additional strength in the military field. If this could go through with relative quiet and speed, it would be a very useful signal in Moscow, but if it were to create a grave controversy, then that would be—create another problem.

Everett Dirksen: Mr. Secretary, how are we going to avoid acrimonies today in view of the gripes that obtained in the last call-up of reserves . . . ?

President Kennedy: Sir, that's why we're talking to you now.

Dirksen: Yeah, [*unclear*].

Now, I think there is probably one way to pour some sugar on that department and achieve that tactic, if in any kind of a statement you were going to particularly mention . . . definitely say "in view of the developments in Cuba" . . . people understand that . . . and a few other things, put 'em in . . . have no doubt in their minds as to why this is needed. You [*unclear*]. Now, Mr. President, I was [*unclear*] yesterday, I

was the guest of the Winnebago Labor Day, on Labor Day.[76] The only thing they wanted to talk about, those that talked to me, wanted to talk about Cuba . . . in Cuba. So this is very much in the average person's mind and you'll have to lay it right on the line in any statement you make; otherwise they'll be hell-a-poppin for one and we won't have any good answers for them, unless you give us the answers.

McNamara: We can say that it will not be necessary. As a matter of fact, we can insert into the resolution, a statement that personnel who had served within the past year and a half would not be called back involuntarily. And we could certainly say that in view of world conditions, including Cuba, we believe it necessary to request this authority to act during the period when Congress is out of session.

Richard Russell: Excuse me, Mr. Secretary, [*unclear*] go back and get the qualified personnel without meeting again with the same group?

McNamara: Yes, we can.

Russell: The only other question you had is about the recommendation to reducing the National Guard reserve force. Is this [*unclear*] in any way contemplated?

McNamara: No, definitely not.

Russell: Because that ought to be explained somewhere.

McNamara: Yes, that can be—that's very very—

Unidentified: Yeah.

Unidentified: Who would we ask? [*Unclear exchange. Then indistinct discussion among the participants.*]

Unidentified: Why don't we lead on this?

Russell: I think that we may have some controversy about this now, Mr. Secretary—

Unidentified: [*whispers in the background*] We will.

Russell: —because it's a political year and you're on the eve of an election. And there have been some legitimate gripes on the part of some of these fellows who have been called up . . . [*unclear*] griping, there's been a lot of questioning, and we can get the bill through all right. But I can't guarantee you that if we [*unclear*] controversy . . . that the President's [*unclear*] I'll do it anyhow [*unclear*] if he wants to do [*unclear*] to assume my part of the responsibility to get that through [*unclear*].

Dirksen: [*Unclear.*]

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76. Senator Everett Dirksen spoke at the Winnebago County (Illinois) Labor Day picnic (*Rockville Register Star*, 4 September 1962). We are grateful for the assistance of the Everett Dirksen Center, University of Illinois, in tracking down this reference.

President Kennedy: Even when pointing out that it's deeper than [*unclear*] international [*unclear*].

Dirksen: Deeper [*unclear*] so damn vulnerable [*unclear*].

President Kennedy: Can we do this in this manner? The Secretary of Defense can talk to the leadership again and to Senator Russell and to Senator . . . to Chairman Vinson in the next two or three days in more detail about the kind of language about how no one would be called up with the exception of [*unclear*] of say a thousand people because it's possible we might want to [*unclear*] Cuba. If we really had an emergency, we could call up an important [*unclear*]—

Russell: I bet a good many would volunteer.

President Kennedy: —go over to talk to the leadership and unless he . . .

McNamara: Yes, Mr. President, we can do that. This doesn't—

President Kennedy: You get [*unclear*] think about in the next day or so.

Carl Vinson: I'm working with [*unclear*] this week. If it does not have to be done this week, it might be better. [*Unclear.*]

The President, McNamara, and the Congressman speak simultaneously.

President Kennedy: [*Unclear*] through just at the end, which you suddenly lost the . . .

McNamara: Yes, I agree [*unclear*], Mr President. It's pertinent to the subject that we discuss it more. But we will draft a resolution and discuss it further.

The meeting seems to have ended and the President has apparently left.

The recorder picks up bits of conversation.

Lincoln: Can I come in?

McNamara: [*Unclear*] I don't think it's necessary to call any of those that were called up before. Do you?

Lyman Lemnitzer: [*Unclear exchange in the background as Lemnitzer speaks.*] I wouldn't think so and [*unclear*] all right.

McNamara: Yeah and get this [*unclear*].

Lemnitzer: I would like to have the 300 people at that point, in January for Cuba.

McNamara: Well, those could be . . . more of those could be extended service of people you have.

Lemnitzer: No, not exactly because we don't have any qualified F-84 people available to do that. They would have to come from the National Guard, if you wanted for us to move, wanted to do the job properly.

Paul Nitze: Is this a question of manpower ceiling now for you or—

McNamara: It's really the 300 specialists on that [*unclear*]—

Lemnitzer: What we did, you see, is we formed some new regular

units. We didn't have in the regular establishment any qualified F-84 people, or practically none.[77] We had to start up a school and send these people to school. Now we've had a plan for getting National Guard people, by name, actually to fill these slots. They'll all be out of school by January so this list has been coming down all the time.

McNamara: What I'd like to avoid, Paul, is sending up a bill that has—

Nitze: One [*Unclear.*]

McNamara: Yeah, one for 300 people, because the criticism will be, or a criticism against the bill, will be that we're going to call up people that had just recently served. I'd like to be able to put in a flat statement that we won't call back people who served recently.

Nitze: Of course, if you . . . You know, it might be that if you just have a proviso covering a thousand men, this is so small that you take the heat off of it.

McNamara: Yeah, but then it points the finger directly and you really get a lot of gripes. I think we can—

Lemnitzer: Well, if we had a little more time, I'd imagine we could get three hundred volunteers.

McNamara: Yeah, I think so, too.

Lemnitzer: [*Unclear.*] Whether it would be the exact people we request or not [*unclear*].

McNamara: Well, yeah. I agree, too.

Lemnitzer: With a little time, I think we can try to find them [*unclear*].

McNamara: I think so, too. And there isn't much . . . we're not talking about a long period here.

Lemnitzer: No.

McNamara: We are only talking about 120 days. I think we could safely have—

Lemnitzer: [*Unclear*] until January it would be a great help if we could use these men.

McNamara: Yeah.

Lemnitzer: Because by January you just get the bodies out of school.

McNamara: Yeah.

Lemnitzer: They would then start the unit training—

McNamara: Yeah.

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77. Manufactured by Republic, the F-84 was a fighter-bomber introduced in 1948. The F-84 swept-wing version followed in 1951.

Lincoln: Do you want [*unclear*]?
Tape is shut off, perhaps by Evelyn Lincoln.

After these discussions, the President had a long one-on-one session with Senator Albert Gore of Tennessee. Then he met with Sorensen and Pierre Salinger. And finally, he closed the day with a five-minute chat with McGeorge Bundy. None of these meetings was taped.

Meanwhile Pierre Salinger, the White House press secretary, read the final text of the President's statement to reporters:

> All Americans, as well as all of our friends in this hemisphere, have been concerned over the recent moves of the Soviet Union to bolster the military power of the Castro regime in Cuba. Information has reached this Government in the last four days from a variety of sources which establishes without doubt that the Soviets have provided the Cuban Government with a number of antiaircraft defense missiles with a slant range of 25 miles which are similar to early models of our Nike. Along with these missiles, the Soviets are apparently providing the extensive radar and other electronic equipment which is required for their operation. We can also confirm the presence of several Soviet-made motor torpedo boats carrying ship-to-ship guided missiles having a range of 15 miles. The number of Soviet military technicians now known to be in Cuba or en route—approximately 3,500—is consistent with assistance in setting up and learning to use this equipment. As I stated last week, we shall continue to make information available as fast as it is obtained and properly verified.
>
> There is no evidence of any organized combat force in Cuba from any Soviet bloc country, of military bases provided to Russia, of a violation of the 1934 treaty relating to Guantánamo, of the presence of offensive ground-to-ground missiles, or of other significant offensive capability either in Cuban hands or under Soviet direction and guidance. Were it to be otherwise, the gravest issues would arise.
>
> The Cuban question must be considered as a part of the worldwide challenge posed by Communist threats to the peace. It must be dealt with as a part of that larger issue as well as in the context of the special relationships which have long characterized the inter-American system.
>
> It continues to be the policy of the United States that the Castro regime will not be allowed to export its aggressive purposes by force or by the threat of force. It will be prevented by whatever means may be necessary from taking action against any part of the Western

Hemisphere. The United States, in conjunction with other hemisphere countries, will make sure that while increased Cuban armaments will be a heavy burden to the unhappy people of Cuba themselves, they will be nothing more.

His official day at an end, the President went for his evening swim at 7:35 P.M.

Wednesday, September 5, 1962

The President reached the Oval Office after breakfast with the congressional leadership. The international news that morning was not good. The Soviets had decided to flex a little muscle in the air corridors linking Berlin to the world. On Tuesday, Soviet MiGs had unexpectedly "escorted" three commercial airplanes flying over East Germany on their way to West Berlin. These actions stood in stark contrast to Moscow's apparent acceptance of a Western plan to regulate Soviet troop movements to the Soviet War Memorial in West Berlin.

The news from Moscow would not get any better in the course of the day. The Soviets would decide to reiterate their opposition to any four-power meeting on Berlin, asserting instead that the best way to eliminate tension in that divided city was to sign peace treaties with both Germanies and remove all troops from West Berlin. And on this day, the Kremlin would also dismiss the Kennedy administration's explanation of the U-2 accident in the Soviet Far East. "Unworthy of responsible politicians," said the authoritative newspaper, *Izvestia*.[1]

This morning Kennedy's chief foreign policy advisers testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee about the current crisis in U.S.-Soviet relations. Neither Dean Rusk nor Robert McNamara mentioned the administration's intention to ask for standby authorization to call up reserves. This was still closely held among the few congressional leaders who had been briefed on Tuesday. But they did talk about Cuba, Berlin, and the fact that the United States still had more nuclear weapons than the Soviet Union.[2]

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1. "Russians Scorn U-2 Note; Call the Flight Aggressive," *New York Times*, 6 September 1962.
2. Executive Sessions of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Together with Joint Sessions