

Otherwise, he's going to announce that we've rejected his proposal. And then where are we?

We're all right, if he would cease work and dismantle the missiles. Then we could talk for another two weeks. But until we get that . . .

Well I think we ought to put that in. Just say: "I learned of your public message attempting to connect the NATO bases and Cuba" and then say it's no good. [There is an] immediate need in the crisis. "Contact is necessary," period. "You must realize that these other matters involving NATO and the Warsaw Pact countries will require time for discussion."

Unless we want him to [*unclear*]. Unless we want him to announce that we've rejected it [a possible Turkey deal], I don't think we ought to leave it this way. I think we ought to say, if we're going to discuss this, then we're going to have a cessation of work. We're not going to get a cessation of work probably, and therefore the burden is on him.

That is our only, it seems to me, defense against the appeal of his trade. I think that our message ought to be that we're glad to discuss this and other matters but we've got to get a cessation of work.

McGeorge Bundy: And the bases [*unclear*] that are already there.

President Kennedy: And then in your public message you attempt to connect it to their missile bases in Cuba.

Llewellyn Thompson: This proposal's come down from New York.

Alexis Johnson: Mr. [Valerian] Zorin has been to U Thant. And one of the people who were there just came out and said that the position that Zorin had taken was that the first letter [from Khrushchev on October 26] was confidential and it was designed to reduce tension but, so far as he was concerned, the second letter [of October 27] contained the substantive proposal.

Unidentified: The second letter was the public letter.

Alexis Johnson: Yes.

President Kennedy: I think we ought to say to U Thant this afternoon that: "Can he give us any assurances, can he get any assurances from the Soviet Union that work has ceased?"

We ought to get that, it seems to me, before the end of the afternoon. Just that simple message to U Thant. He ought to call Zorin in before we discuss these other matters.

Alexis Johnson: Oh, I think that's a good idea.

Robert Kennedy: And the missiles may come, too.

President Kennedy: Why don't we send that up to U Thant right now, before we discuss these other matters which are complicated and involve other countries and which are bound to take time, and everybody will recognize take time.