

Vice President Johnson: I think what will bother them is that this man in the United States is not coming [to his aid in a crisis].

Rusk: Well, that would be . . . The point is, the point there, is that we're there. Our NATO [*unclear*] includes the nuclear aircraft there. Those are our planes?

Unidentified: Yes. Always. There are both U.S.—there are both U.S. aircraft and [other NATO].³⁵

Vice President Johnson: Well, then, if we're going to do it, why don't we try to sell them on that, Mr. Secretary? Have Hare talk to him and just say: "Now, you're more likely to get hit this way than you are the other way."

Isn't that true, Tommy?

Thompson: Yeah. Actually, we'd give them better protection. The Jupiters are totally obsolete. But, which I think we can . . .

The trouble with all this is that, unless we're absolutely decided we're going to hit Cuba, bomb them, then this would leave us in a very difficult position. They'll take their guided missiles, but they'll leave their technicians in Cuba, and their bombing planes in Cuba, and we're in a hell of a mess.

Unidentified: Say [in U.S. demands to the Soviets]: "nuclear weapons, nuclear delivery systems."

Dillon: Well, now, we're just talking about missiles. Because we can't talk about planes, because then we have to take our planes out of Turkey, you see, and we don't want to do that.

Thompson: The only possible, it seems to me, justification for this [approach to Turkey] is if they know you're going to bomb.

Vice President Johnson: Look, the weakness of the whole thing is, you say: "Well they [the Soviets] shot down one plane, and they [the Americans] gave up Turkey." Then they [the Soviets] shoot down another, and they [the Americans] give up Berlin. You know, like a mad dog—he tastes a little blood, he . . .

Thompson: You see, I think they've been put up by the Lippmann piece.³⁶ It occurs to me that we really aren't prepared to talk Turkey for Cuba.

35. Both U.S. and Turkish aircraft capable of carrying nuclear bombs, and with the U.S. aircraft certified as ready to carry them, were based on land in Turkey. Nuclear bombs for these aircraft were also stockpiled in Turkey under U.S. control.

36. Thompson is referring to a column by Walter Lippmann, suggesting a Cuba-Turkey trade, that appeared in the *Washington Post* on the morning of 25 October.