

**Vice President Johnson:** Just tell the Russians.

**Rusk:** [*Unclear*] that one out on the Cubans. What we're doing is increasing the odds that they—

**Vice President Johnson:** Actually, the Russians are doing it, but you have to give them hell.

**Dillon:** We know the Russians are doing it, but we don't want to kill the Russians. Don't we have to change it [*perhaps referring to McCone's draft message to Khrushchev*] and say: "Unless you prevail upon your Cuban . . ."

**Thompson:** The only thing that bothers me at all about is the . . . You can see that we have two conflicting things here. One is to prepare for an attack on Cuba, and the other is to get a peaceful solution along the lines which we have proposed. And the purposes are conflicting. If you want to get him to accept this thing that he put in his letter last night, then we shouldn't give any indication we're ready to talk about the Turkish thing. Because if we do, and put it forward, then we have to take one of those two courses.

**Rusk:** Is that [message to Khrushchev] now being translated?

**Unidentified:** Yes, they are going to deliver it in English. They called the messenger into the local embassy here.<sup>39</sup>

**Rusk:** I see.

**Unidentified:** The whole problem is to make those operational.

**Unidentified:** Can we send it on the wire from here?

*Unclear exchange; two conversations are going on at once, one culminating in brief laughter.*

**Vice President Johnson:** —Those damn planes that he has going.

**Thompson:** They've [the Soviets have] done two things. They've put up the price and they have escalated the action.

**Vice President Johnson:** The action?

**Thompson:** The action. And I think to mention, as McCone does [in his new draft message to Khrushchev], that we can discuss these other things may be to give them a further ground for attack, but it certainly is bad from the perspective of Khrushchev. I think this is a further sign of weakness.

**Unidentified:** The Turks?

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39. This exchange is probably referring to the message to Khrushchev. The speaker probably meant to say *Russian* rather than *English*, as the Soviet Embassy in Washington would translate the message into Russian and was calling in a messenger (such as one from Western Union) in order to have the encrypted cable transmitted to Moscow.