

President Kennedy: Well I've already sent him one.

McCone: Well this is a thoughtful one. [*Laughter, unclear exchange.*]

Vice President Johnson: Do you have a copy of it?

McCone: Here it is.

President Kennedy: [*Unclear, reading draft.*] [*Unclear exchange.*]

Thompson: Call them Cuban forces, instead of your forces.

McCone: No. I think they are his forces.

Rusk: No, but I mean we—

President Kennedy: Can we meet here . . . I don't think we can get it.

I think we've got two or three different proposals here. Can we meet at nine [P.M.] and everybody get a bite to eat, and then come back and see whether we send this [McCone's] message.

We'll see about what we do about our plane. We see about our two messages to the U.N.—I mean—this Turkish thing [the McNamara and Ball alternatives], and probably think about that. And I think it would be better at . . . Say nine we meet?

The marathon Executive Committee meeting then broke up. There is some mixed discussion for several minutes as participants leave.

President Kennedy's message to Khrushchev was transmitted to Moscow a few minutes later, at about 8:00 P.M. Robert Kennedy was preparing to deliver it personally to Dobrynin. The message was being simultaneously released to the press. The final message read as follows:

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I have read your letter of October 26 with great care and welcomed the statement of your desire to seek a prompt solution to the problem. The first thing that needs to be done, however, is for work to cease on offensive missile bases in Cuba and for all weapons systems in Cuba capable of offensive use to be rendered inoperable, under effective United Nations arrangements.

Assuming this is done promptly, I have given my representatives in New York instructions that will permit them to work out this week and—in cooperation with the Acting Secretary General and your representative—an arrangement for a permanent solution to the Cuban problem along the lines suggested in your letter of October 26. As I read your letter, the key elements of your proposals—which seem generally acceptable as I understand them—are as follows: