

McNamara: I think that the point is, that if our planes are fired on tomorrow, we ought to fire back. That's what I'd have the [*unclear*], we fire back at the best indication of the antiaircraft sites that we have, [which] is around the missile sites—

Rusk: Why fire back at some missiles on the ground on the basis that you're firing back at the antiaircraft [guns]?

Dillon: Because that's where they are, that's what they think.

President Kennedy: Let me say, I think we ought to wait till tomorrow afternoon, to see whether we get any answers if U Thant goes down there [to Havana].

We're rapidly approaching a real . . . I don't think that firing back at a 20 millimeter [gun] coming off the ground is good. I think we ought to figure that Monday [October 29], if tomorrow they fire at us and we don't have any answer from the Russians, then Monday, it seems to me . . . We ought to, maybe, consider making a statement tomorrow about the firing and that we're going to take action now any place in Cuba on those areas which can fire. And then go in and take *all* the SAM sites out. I don't think that it does any good to take out, to try to fire at a 20 millimeter on the ground. We just hazard our planes, and the people on the ground have the advantage.

On the other hand, I don't want, I don't think we do any good to begin to sort of *half* do it. I think we ought to keep tomorrow clean, do the best we can with the surveillance. If they still fire and we haven't got a satisfactory answer back from the Russians, then I think we ought to put a statement out tomorrow that we are fired upon. We are therefore considering the island of Cuba as an open territory, and then take out all these SAM sites.

Otherwise, what we're going to do is find this buildup of the protection for the SAM sites low [with guns to fire at low-flying planes], and the SAM sites high [missiles for high-flying aircraft], and we'll find ourselves without . . . Our reply will be so limited and we'll find ourselves with all the disadvantages.

I think we ought to, tomorrow, let's get U Thant our messages: If they fire on us, tell them [the reconnaissance pilots] to come on out. And then if we don't get some satisfaction from the Russians or U Thant or Cuba tomorrow night, figure that Monday we're going to do something about the SAM sites. What do you think?

McNamara: I would say only that we ought to keep some kind of pressure on tonight and tomorrow night that indicates we're firm. Now if we call off these air strikes tonight, I think that settles that—