

## A C H R O N O L O G Y O F E V E N T S

*September 28, 1962:* Navy air reconnaissance aircraft observing Cuba-bound ships photograph ten large shipping crates on the decks of the Soviet vessel *Kasimov*. After studying the size and configuration of the crates, photoanalysts determine that the containers hold Soviet IL-28 light bomber aircraft. The IL-28s are over twelve years old and have been removed almost entirely from the Soviet Air Force in 1960. Although technically capable of carrying nuclear payloads, the aircraft have never been given a nuclear delivery role. (*The Soviet Bloc Armed Forces and the Cuban Crisis: A Chronology July–November 1962*, 6/18/63, p. 16; *Interim Report by the Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee on the Cuban Military Buildup*, 5/9/63, p. 7; *Department of Defense Press Conference of Robert McNamara*, 2/28/63, p. N-1; Garthoff 1, p. 104)

*October 1, 1962:* Secretary McNamara meets with the JCS for a briefing on the latest intelligence on Cuba and to discuss intensified Cuban contingency planning. Defense Intelligence Agency analysts inform the group that some intelligence points to the possibility that MRBMs have been positioned in Pinar del Río Province. After the meeting, Admiral Robert Dennison, commander-in-chief of the U.S. Atlantic Command (CINCLANT), is directed by McNamara "to be prepared to institute a blockade against Cuba." The commanders-in-chief of the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Air Force under the Atlantic Command are also directed to preposition military equipment and weapons needed to execute the airstrike plan. (*USCONARC Participation in the Cuban Crisis*, 10/63, p. 8; *CINCLANT Historical Account of Cuban Crisis*, 4/29/63, p. 39; *Department of Defense Operations during the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 2/12/63, p. 2)

*October 2, 1962:* As a result of his meeting with the JCS the previous day, Robert McNamara sends a memo to the JCS outlining six circumstances in which military action against Cuba may be necessary:

- a. Soviet action against Western rights in Berlin....
- b. Evidence that the Castro regime has permit-

ted the positioning of bloc offensive weapons on Cuban soil or in Cuban harbors.

c. An attack against the Guantánamo Naval Base or against U.S. planes or vessels outside Cuban territorial air space or waters.

d. A substantial popular uprising in Cuba, the leaders of which request assistance....

e. Cuban armed assistance to subversion in other parts of the Western Hemisphere.

f. A decision by the President that the affairs in Cuba have reached a point inconsistent with continuing U.S. national security.

McNamara asks that future military planning cover a variety of these contingencies, and place particular emphasis on plans that would assure that Fidel Castro is removed from power. (*CINCLANT Historical Account of Cuban Crisis*, 4/29/63, pp. 41–42; Johns, pp. 81–82)

*October 4, 1962:* The SGA meets to discuss the progress of OPERATION MONGOOSE. According to minutes of the meeting, Robert Kennedy states that the president was "concerned about progress on the MONGOOSE program" and believed that "more priority should be given to trying to mount sabotage operations." The attorney general also expresses the president's "concern over [the] developing situation," and urges that "massive activity" be undertaken within the MONGOOSE framework. The group agrees that plans for the mining of Cuban harbors and for capturing Cuban forces for interrogation should be considered. (*Memorandum of Mongoose Meeting Held on Thursday, October 4, 1962*, 10/4/62; *Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders*, 11/20/75, p. 147)

*October 6, 1962:* CINCLANT directs increased readiness to execute an invasion of Cuba. On October 1, CINCLANT orders military units to increase their readiness posture to execute Oplan 312, the airstrike on Cuba. With the new orders, the prepositioning of troops, aircraft, ships, and other equipment and supplies are directed to increase readiness to follow an airstrike with a full invasion of the island using one of two U.S. invasion plans known as Oplan 314 and

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Oplan 316. (*CINCLANT Historical Account of Cuban Crisis*, 4/29/63, p. 40)

October 8, 1962: Cuban President Dorticós, addressing the U.N. General Assembly, calls upon the United Nations to condemn the U.S. trade embargo against Cuba. Near the end of his address, Dorticós declares: "If...we are attacked, we will defend ourselves. I repeat, we have sufficient means with which to defend ourselves; we have indeed our inevitable weapons, the weapons which we would have preferred not to acquire and which we do not wish to employ." The speech is interrupted four times by anti-Castro demonstrators. (*Address by H.E. Dr. Osvaldo Dorticós, President of the Republic of Cuba*, 10/8/62; Szulc, p. 646)

October 13, 1962: State Department Ambassador-at-Large Chester Bowles has a long conversation with Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin. Bowles, after having been briefed by Thomas Hughes of the State Department Bureau of Intelligence and Research, tells Dobrynin that the United States "had some evidence" indicating that Soviet nuclear missiles were in Cuba. Dobrynin, who had not been told of the missile deployment by the Kremlin, repeatedly denies that the Soviet Union harbored any intention of placing such weapons in Cuba. (*Ambassador Bowles Visit to Nkrumah*, 11/2/62; *Oral History Interview with Chester Bowles by Robert Brooks*, 2/2/65; Hilsman 1, p. 166)

October 14, 1962—early morning: A U-2 aircraft flies over western Cuba from south to north. The reconnaissance mission, piloted by Major Richard Heyser, is the first Strategic Air Command (SAC) mission after authority for the flights is transferred from the CIA to the air force. The photographs obtained by the mission provide the first hard evidence of MRBM sites in Cuba. (Bundy, p. 301)

October 15, 1962—morning: Quick readout teams at the National Photographic Interpretation Center (NPIC) in Washington analyze photos taken by Richard Heyser's U-2 mission. Late in the afternoon,

one of the teams finds pictures showing the main components of a Soviet MRBM in a field at San Cristóbal. Analysis of reconnaissance photos during the day also identifies all but one of the remaining twenty-four SAM sites in Cuba. Other photographs of San Julián airfield show that IL-28 light bombers are being uncrated. (*The Soviet Bloc Armed Forces and the Cuban Crisis: A Chronology July–November 1962*, 6/18/63, p. 40; Cline, p. 89; Prados, p. 110)

October 15, 1962—late afternoon: A senior officer at NPIC phones CIA Deputy Director of Intelligence Ray Cline to inform him of the discovery. The officials at NPIC have tried to contact CIA Director McCone but are unable to reach him en route to Los Angeles. Cline requests that NPIC completely recheck the photographs and consult with missile experts outside of the agency. Cline asks that he be called again between 8:00 and 10:00 P.M. to be informed of the results of these additional analyses. (Cline, p. 89)

October 15, 1962—evening: Key Kennedy administration officials are tracked down in Washington and briefed about the discovery of the missiles. National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy, who is given the news by Ray Cline, decides to wait until morning to alert President Kennedy. Bundy later states that he chose to wait because it was not possible to prepare a presentation information until morning and because he feared that a hastily summoned meeting at night would jeopardize secrecy. (*Explanation of Why McGeorge Bundy Did Not Inform President Kennedy of the Missiles in Cuba until the Morning of October 16*, 3/4/63; Cline, pp. 90–91)

October 15, 1962: The SGA orders the acceleration of covert activities against Cuba. In particular, the group agrees that "considerably more sabotage should be undertaken" and that "all efforts should be made to develop new and imaginative approaches with the possibility of getting rid of the Castro regime." (*Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders*, 11/20/75, p. 147)

A major U.S. military exercise named PHIBRI- GLEX-62 is scheduled to begin. The two-week long

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maneuver was to have employed twenty thousand Navy personnel and four thousand Marines in an amphibious assault on Puerto Rico's Vieques Island and the overthrow of its imaginary tyrant, "Ortsac"—"Castro" spelled backwards. However, because of the impending crisis, Phibriglex-62 is used primarily as cover for troop and equipment deployments aimed at increasing military readiness for a strike on Cuba. (*CINCLANT Historical Account of Cuban Crisis*, 4/29/63, p. 2; *The Cuban Crisis*, 1962, ca. 8/22/63, pp. 72-73; Allison, p. 47)

*October 16, 1962—8:45 A.M.:* McGeorge Bundy informs President Kennedy that "hard photographic evidence" has been obtained showing Soviet MRBMs in Cuba. Kennedy immediately calls an 11:45 A.M. meeting and dictates the names of the fourteen or so advisers he wants present. This is the group that becomes known as the "ExComm"—the Executive Committee of the National Security Council. Later that morning, President Kennedy briefs his brother Robert, who expresses surprise at the news. Kennedy also telephones John McCloy, a Republican lawyer who acted as a private adviser to the president. McCloy recommends that the president take forceful action to remove the missiles, even if that involves an airstrike and an invasion. (Abel, pp. 44-45; Issacson, p. 620)

*October 16, 1962—11:15 A.M.:* President Kennedy confers for half an hour with Charles Bohlen, the former U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union who has just been appointed ambassador to France. Bohlen later recalls that at this early stage in the crisis, "there seemed to be no doubt in [Kennedy's] mind, and certainly none in mine, that the United States would have to get these bases eliminated...the only question was how it was to be done." Bohlen participates in the first ExComm meeting later that morning but leaves for France on the following day. (*The President's Appointment Book*, ca. 11/22/62; *Interview with Charles E. Bohlen by Arthur Schlesinger: Excerpts on the Cuban Crisis*, 5/21/64)

*October 16, 1962—11:50 A.M.:* The first meeting of the ExComm convenes. Photographic evidence is presented to the group, including pictures of missile sites under construction with canvas-covered missile trailers. The missiles are initially identified by photoanalysts as nuclear-tipped SS-3s by their length; by evening, the MRBMs are correctly identified as longer range SS-4 missiles. No nuclear warheads are reported seen in the area. CIA photoanalyst Sidney Graybeal informs the group that "we do not believe [the missiles] are ready to fire." The first part of the noon meeting covers questions regarding the validity and certainty of the evidence, Soviet military capabilities in Cuba and what additional U.S. surveillance might be required. Further U-2 flights are ordered, and six U-2 reconnaissance missions are flown during the day. In the freewheeling discussion, participants cover a number of different options for dealing with the Cuban situation. The principle options discussed are: (1) a single, surgical airstrike on the missile bases; (2) an attack on various Cuban facilities; (3) a comprehensive series of attacks and invasion; or (4) a blockade of Cuba. Preliminary discussions lean toward taking some form of military action. As discussions continue on proposals to destroy the missiles by airstrike, Robert Kennedy passes a note to the president: "I now know how Tojo felt when he was planning Pearl Harbor." (*Transcript of October 27 Cuban Missile Crisis ExComm Meetings*, 10/27/62; Kennedy, pp. 30-31)

*October 16, 1962—afternoon:* McNamara, Deputy Secretary of Defense Roswell Gilpatric, and the JCS hold a luncheon meeting to begin preparing the military for any actions that might be ordered. At the State Department, additional discussions continue with Dean Rusk, Under Secretary of State George Ball, Adlai Stevenson, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Edwin Martin, Deputy Under Secretary of State U. Alexis Johnson, and State Department Soviet specialist Llewellyn Thompson. (*Chronology of the Cuban Crisis October 15-28, 1962*, 11/2/62, p. 1; Taylor, p. 269)

The USIB meets to examine U-2 photographs and to coordinate intelligence on the crisis. During the meeting, the USIB directs the Guided Missile and As-

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tronautics Intelligence Committee (GMAIC) to prepare an immediate evaluation of the Soviet missile sites. The GMAIC concludes that the missiles are clearly under Soviet control and that there is no evidence that nuclear warheads are present in Cuba. It also concludes that the missile installations thus far identified do not appear to be operational. (*The Cuban Crisis*, 1962, ca. 8/22/63, p. 36)

The SGA convenes in the White House prior to the second ExComm meeting. According to Richard Helms's notes, Robert Kennedy expresses President Kennedy's "general dissatisfaction" with progress under the MONGOOSE program. The SGA discusses but rejects several alternatives for eliminating the newly discovered Soviet missile sites in Cuba, including a proposal to have Cuban émigrés bomb the missile sites. (*Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders*, 11/20/75, p. 146; Hurwitch, p. 33)

*October 16, 1962—6:30 P.M.:* At the second ExComm meeting, Marshall Carter states that the missiles could be "fully operational within two weeks," although a single missile might achieve operational capability "much sooner." After the intelligence report is presented, Robert McNamara outlines three broad options for action. The first is "political," involving communications with Fidel Castro and Premier Khrushchev; the second is "part political, part military," involving a blockade of weapons and open surveillance; the third is "military" involving an attack on Cuba and the missile sites. The ExComm members debate, but do not resolve, which option should be used. (Document 16, *Transcript of the Second Executive Committee Meeting*, 10/16/62)

*October 16, 1962:* Premier Khrushchev receives U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union Foy Kohler for a three-hour conversation on a variety of subjects. Khrushchev reassures Kohler that the Cuban fishing port that the Soviet Union has recently agreed to help build will remain entirely nonmilitary. Khrushchev adds that the Cuban government has announced the agreement without consulting Soviet officials, and that when he learned of the leak, he "cursed them and said they should have waited until after the U.S. elec-

tions." Once again, Khrushchev insists that all Soviet activity in Cuba was defensive and sharply criticizes U.S. bases in Turkey and Italy. (*Report on Khrushchev-Kohler Meeting, October 16 (Part IV: Discussion of U-2, Cuban Fishing Port, Nuclear Test Ban and U.S. Elections) In Two Sections*, 10/16/62; Sorensen, p. 691; Hilsman 1, p. 166)

*October 17, 1962—morning:* Adlai Stevenson writes to President Kennedy that world opinion would equate the U.S. missiles stationed in Turkey with Soviet bases in Cuba. Warning that U.S. officials could not "negotiate with a gun at our head," he states, "I feel you should have made it clear that the existence of nuclear missile bases anywhere is negotiable before we start anything." Stevenson suggests that personal emissaries should be sent to both Fidel Castro and Premier Khrushchev to discuss the situation. (*Document 19, U.N. Ambassador Adlai Stevenson's Opinions Against an Airstrike on Cuba*, 10/17/62)

*October 17, 1962—morning:* Further debate on the Cuban situation takes place at the State Department. Dean Acheson and John McCone attend discussions for the first time, though President Kennedy and Vice President Johnson are absent. By this time, Robert McNamara has become the strongest proponent of the blockade option. McNamara reports that a "surgical" airstrike option is militarily impractical in the view of the JCS and that any military action would have to include attacks on all military installations in Cuba, eventually leading to an invasion. McNamara urges seeking alternative means of removing the missiles from Cuba before embarking on such a drastic course of action. However, critics of the blockade, led primarily by Dean Acheson, argue that a blockade would have no effect on the missiles already in Cuba. Airstrike proponents also express concern that a U.S. blockade would shift the confrontation from Cuba to the Soviet Union and that Soviet counteractions, including a Berlin blockade, might result. (*Chronology of the Cuban Crisis October 15–28, 1962*, 11/2/62, p. 2; Kennedy, pp. 34–35)

*October 17, 1962:* Around this time, Georgi Bolshakov, a Soviet embassy official who served as an authoritative back channel for communications between Soviet and U.S. leaders, relays a message from Premier Khrushchev to Attorney General Robert Kennedy that the arms being sent to Cuba are intended only for defensive purposes. Bolshakov had not been told by Khrushchev that the Soviet Union is actually in the process of installing MRBMs and IRBMs in Cuba. By the time Bolshakov's message reaches President Kennedy, he has been fully briefed on the Soviet missile deployment. (Hilsman, p. 166; Kennedy, p. 27; Schlesinger, pp. 499-502)

An SS-5 IRBM site, the first of three to be identified, is detected in Cuba. The SS-5s have ranges of up to 2,200 nautical miles, more than twice the range of the SS-4 MRBMs. The GMAIC estimates that the IRBM sites would not become operational before December but that sixteen and possibly as many as thirty-two MRBMs would be operational in about a week. No SS-5 missiles actually reach Cuba at any time, although this is not completely confirmed by U.S. officials during the crisis. (*The Cuban Crisis, 1962*, ca. 8/22/63, p. 36; *Department of Defense Press Conference of Robert McNamara, 2/28/63*, p. F-2; Garthoff 1, p. 209)

*October 18, 1962—11:00 A.M.:* The ExComm convenes for further discussions. The JCS, attending part of the meeting, recommends that President Kennedy order an airstrike on the missiles and other key Cuban military installations. However, Robert Kennedy responds by asking whether a surprise air attack would be a morally acceptable course of action. According to Robert Kennedy, the ExComm spent "more time [deliberating] on this moral question during the first five days than on any other single matter." (Kennedy, pp. 38-39; Taylor, p. 269)

*October 18, 1962—2:30 P.M.:* More discussions take place in Dean Rusk's conference room at the State Department. President Kennedy, who does not attend the talks, confers privately with Dean Rusk and Robert McNamara at 3:30 P.M. During the day, Kennedy also meets privately with Dean Acheson for

over an hour. When the president raises his brother's concern over the morality of a "Pearl Harbor in reverse," Acheson reportedly tells Kennedy that he was being "silly" and that it was "unworthy of [him] to talk that way." Acheson again voices his opinion that the surgical airstrike is the best U.S. option. Acheson, however, is in the minority in dismissing the Pearl Harbor analogy. Although Paul Nitze also recalls thinking that the analogy was "nonsense," others like George Ball find it persuasive. In some cases, as with Secretary of the Treasury Douglas Dillon, the moral argument becomes the deciding factor behind their support for the blockade. (Blight, pp., 142, 152; Schlesinger, p. 508; Issacson, p. 622)

*October 18, 1962—5:00 P.M.:* Andrei Gromyko and President Kennedy meet at the White House. Gromyko states that Premier Khrushchev plans to visit the United Nations following the U.S. elections in November and that he believes a meeting with Kennedy at that time would be useful. After Kennedy agrees to meet the Soviet Premier, Gromyko turns the discussion to Cuba, charging that the United States is "pestering" a small country. According to the minutes of the meeting, "Gromyko stated that he was instructed to make it clear...that [Soviet military] assistance, [was] pursued solely for the purpose of contributing to the defense capabilities of Cuba...If it were otherwise, the Soviet Government would never had become involved in rendering such assistance." Kennedy has decided not to discuss U.S. awareness of the missiles with Gromyko. So, without taking exception to Gromyko's claim, Kennedy responds by reading a portion of his September 4 statement warning against the deployment of offensive weapons in Cuba. After a discussion of other issues, the meeting ends at 7:08 P.M. Following the talk with Gromyko, Kennedy directs Llewellyn Thompson to inform Ambassador Dobrynin that a summit would not in fact be appropriate at that time. Kennedy then meets with Robert Lovett, a former government official brought in to give advice in the crisis. Lovett warns that an airstrike would appear to be an excessive first step. He argues that a blockade is a better alternative, although he expresses a preference for blocking the movement of all

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materials into Cuba except for food and medicine, rather than limiting the quarantine to offensive weapons. (*The Cuban Crisis, 1962*, ca. 8/22/63, pp. 56-58; *Memoranda of Conversations on Kennedy-Gromyko Meeting [in Four Parts]*, 10/18/62; Bundy, p. 399; Garthoff 1, p. 48)

*October 18, 1962—9:00 P.M.*: Meeting at the White House, the ExComm presents its recommendations to President Kennedy. By this time, most members of the committee support the blockade option. As the meeting progresses however, individual opinions begin to shift and the consensus behind the blockade breaks down. Kennedy directs the group to continue its deliberations. (Kennedy, pp. 43-44)

*October 18, 1962—evening*: Robert Kennedy phones his deputy, Nicholas deB. Katzenbach, to request the preparation of a brief establishing the legal basis for a blockade of Cuba. The legality of a blockade is also examined independently at the State Department by Leonard C. Meeker, the deputy legal adviser. (*NYT*, 11/3/62)

*October 18, 1962*: The first of a series of daily "Joint Evaluation" intelligence reports is disseminated. The evaluation, the product of collaboration between the Joint Atomic Energy Intelligence Committee (JAEIC) and the Guided Missile and Astronautics Intelligence Committee (GMAIC), states that the MRBMs in Cuba could probably be launched within eighteen hours. (*The Cuban Crisis, 1962*, ca. 8/22/63, pp. 45-46, 53)

*October 19, 1962—11:00 A.M.*: At the State Department, Nicholas Katzenbach and Leonard Meeker provide the ExComm with their legal opinions regarding a blockade of Cuba. As the meeting progresses, it becomes apparent that sharp disagreements about how the United States should proceed still exist. In order to provide clear options to President Kennedy, the ExComm decides that independent working groups should be established. Separate groups are to develop the blockade and airstrike options, drafting speeches for each plan and outlining

possible contingencies. (*The Cuban Crisis, 1962*, ca. 8/22/63, p. 63; Document 21, *Minutes of October 19, 1962, 11:00 A.M. ExComm Meeting, 10/19/62*; Schlesinger, p. 515)

*October 19, 1962—early afternoon*: Discussions continue in the ExComm. The papers developed by the separate working groups are exchanged and critiqued. In the course of this process, airstrike proponents begin to shift their support to the blockade option. The airstrike speech is abandoned, and Theodore Sorensen agrees to try to put together a speech for President Kennedy on the blockade. Sorensen completes the speech at 3:00 A.M. the following day. (*Chronology of the Cuban Crisis October 15-28, 1962, 11/2/62*, p. 3; Kennedy, pp. 45-47; Sorensen, pp. 692-93)

*October 19, 1962—8:40 P.M.*: U. Alexis Johnson and Paul Nitze meet to develop a specific timetable for carrying out all of the diplomatic and military actions required by the airstrike or the blockade plan. The schedule includes raising military alert levels, reinforcing Guantánamo naval base and briefing NATO allies. All timing revolves around the "P Hour"—the time when President Kennedy would address the nation to inform Americans of the crisis. (*Quarantine, 10/20/62*; Blight, p. 145; Johnson, pp. 383-86)

*October 19, 1962—evening*: Responding to questions about an article by Paul Scott and Robert Allen dealing with Soviet missiles in Cuba, a Defense Department spokesperson replies that the Pentagon has no information indicating that there are missiles in Cuba. Reports that emergency military measures are being implemented are also denied. (*Chronology of the Cuban Crisis October 15-28, 1962, 11/2/62*, p. 4; *The Cuban Crisis, 1962*, ca. 8/22/63, p. 71a)

*October 19, 1962*: SNIE 11-18-62, entitled "Soviet Reactions to Certain U.S. Courses of Action on Cuba," reports that a direct approach to Premier Khrushchev or Fidel Castro is unlikely to halt the ongoing deployment of missiles to Cuba. On the other hand, a total blockade of Cuba, the SNIE projects,

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would "almost certainly" lead to "strong direct pressures" elsewhere by the Soviet government. Any form of direct military action against Cuba would result in an even greater chance of Soviet military retaliation. In such a situation, the report notes, there exists "the possibility that the Soviets, under great pressure to respond, would again miscalculate and respond in a way which, through a series of actions and reactions, could escalate to general war..." The SNIE is read by President Kennedy and most of the main policy planners the following day. SNIE 11-19-62, produced on October 20, draws similar conclusions. (*Soviet Reactions to Certain U.S. Courses of Action on Cuba*, 10/19/62; Document 24, *CIA SNIE, Major Consequences of Certain US Courses of Action on Cuba*, 10/20/62; *The Cuban Crisis*, 1962, ca. 8/22/63, p. 68)

*October 20, 1962—9:00 A.M.:* ExComm meetings continue at the State Department. Final planning for the implementation of a naval blockade is completed, and Theodore Sorensen's draft speech for President Kennedy is amended and approved. As McNamara leaves the conference room, he reportedly phones the Pentagon and orders four tactical squadrons to be readied for a possible airstrike on Cuba. McNamara explains to an official who overhears the conversation, "If the president doesn't accept our recommendation, there won't be time to do it later." (*Chronology of the Cuban Crisis October 15-28, 1962*, 11/2/62, p. 4; *The Cuban Crisis*, 1962, ca. 8/22/63 p. 71b; Abel, p. 93)

*October 20, 1962—2:30 P.M.:* President Kennedy meets with the full group of planning principals. He notes that the airstrike plan as presented is not a "surgical" strike but a massive military commitment that could involve heavy casualties on all sides. As if to underscore the scale of the proposed U.S. military attack on Cuba, one member of the JCS reportedly suggests the use of nuclear weapons, saying that the Soviet Union would use its nuclear weapons in an attack. President Kennedy directs that attention be focused on implementing the blockade option, calling it the only course of action compatible with American principles. The scenario for the full quarantine operation, covering diplomatic initiatives, public statements,

and military actions, is reviewed and approved. Kennedy's address to the nation is set for October 22, at 7:00 P.M.

Adlai Stevenson, who has flown in from New York, enters the discussion late. He proposes that the quarantine be accompanied by a U.S. proposal for a settlement involving the withdrawal of U.S. missiles from Turkey and the evacuation of Guantánamo. The proposal is promptly attacked by several of the participants who believe it concedes too much. President Kennedy is among those critical of Stevenson's proposal. According to minutes of the meeting, Kennedy "agreed that at an appropriate time we would have to acknowledge that we were willing to take strategic missiles out of Turkey and Italy if this issue was raised by the Russians.... But he was firm in saying we should only make such a proposal in the future." After the meeting adjourns at 5:10 P.M., President Kennedy tells Theodore Sorensen that he is canceling the remainder of his midterm election campaign trip. Kennedy instructs Sorensen to redraft the quarantine speech, although he notes that he would not make a final decision on whether to opt for the quarantine or an airstrike until he has consulted one last time with air force officials the next morning. (*The Cuban Crisis*, 1962, ca. 8/22/63, pp. 74-77; Schlesinger, p. 515; Kennedy, p. 48; Sorensen, pp. 1-3)

*October 20, 1962—late night:* James Reston, Washington Bureau Chief for the *New York Times*, phones George Ball and McGeorge Bundy to ask why there is such a flurry of activity in Washington. Reston is given a partial briefing on the Cuban situation but is requested to hold the story in the interests of national security. (*The Cuban Crisis*, 1962, ca. 8/22/63, p. 83a)

*October 20, 1962:* The intelligence community prepares another SNIE reviewing the possible consequences of certain courses of action that the United States could follow with regard to Cuba. The study, numbered SNIE 11-19-62, describes the status of armaments deployed in Cuba. It is estimated that sixteen launchers for SS-4 MRBMs are operational and that these operational missiles could be fired within eight hours of a decision to launch. The inventory of

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other major Soviet weapons identified in Cuba by the SNIE includes: (a) twenty-two IL-28 jet light bombers; (b) thirty-nine MiG-21 jet fighters; (c) sixty-two less advanced jet fighters; (d) twenty-four 24 SA-2 missile sites; (e) three cruise missile sites for coastal defense; and (f) twelve Komar-class cruise missile patrol boats. (Document 24, *CIA SNIE, Consequences of Certain U.S. Courses of Action on Cuba*, 10/20/62)

A nuclear warhead storage bunker is identified at one of the Cuban MRBM sites for the first time. U.S. intelligence proves unable to establish definitively whether warheads are actually in Cuba at any time, however, and the ExComm believes it prudent simply to assume that they are. Soviet sources have recently suggested that twenty of a planned deployment of forty nuclear warheads reached the islands but that none of the warheads were ever actually "mated" to the missiles. (*Chronology of JCS Decisions Concerning the Cuban Crisis*, 12/21/62; Garthoff 1, pp. 37-42)

*October 21, 1962—10:00 A.M.:* President Kennedy meets with secretaries Rusk and McNamara. After a brief discussion, Kennedy gives final approval to the quarantine plan. Around this time, White House Press Secretary Pierre Salinger is informed of the crisis for the first time by McGeorge Bundy. (*The Cuban Crisis*, 1962, ca. 8/22/63, pp. 78-79a)

*October 21, 1962—11:30 A.M.:* At a meeting in the Oval Office, the commander of the Tactical Air Command (TAC), General Walter C. Sweeney, meets with President Kennedy and other top officials to discuss the air attack concept. Sweeney tells the group that to eliminate the missiles in Cuba, TAC believes that additional strikes are required on, at a minimum, Soviet SAM sites and MiG airfields, and that altogether several hundred bombing sorties would be required. After carrying out all these strikes, Sweeney states, he can only guarantee that 90 percent of the Soviet missiles would be destroyed. Although Kennedy has apparently finalized plans for the quarantine before Sweeney's briefing, he nonetheless directs that the military be prepared to carry out an airstrike anytime after the morning of October 22. (Document 25, *Robert McNamara, Notes on Military Briefing for President Kennedy*, 10/21/62)

*October 21, 1962—2:30 P.M.:* The president convenes a formal meeting of the National Security Council. Admiral George Anderson briefs the gathering on the quarantine plans and procedures that he has drawn up earlier in the day. Anderson explains that each ship approaching the quarantine line will be signaled to stop for boarding and inspection. If the ship does not respond, a shot will be fired across the bow. If there is still no response, a shot will be fired into the rudder to cripple the vessel. President Kennedy expresses concern that such an action might unintentionally destroy the boat, but Anderson reassures the president that it is possible to cripple a ship without sinking it. Kennedy concludes the meeting by observing that the United States might be subjected to threats in the following days but that "the biggest danger lay in taking no action."

Midway through the ExComm session, Kennedy and Robert Lovett leave the room briefly to hold a private conversation. Kennedy asks Lovett if he thinks that Adlai Stevenson is capable of handling negotiations at the United Nations. Lovett replies that he does not think Stevenson is right for the job and recommends that Stevenson be assisted by John McCloy. Kennedy agrees, and Lovett arranges to have McCloy flown from Germany to the United States. (*The Cuban Crisis*, 1962, ca. 8/22/63, p. 81; *Department of Defense Operations during the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 2/12/63, p. 2; Issacson, p. 627; Sagan, p. 112)

*October 21, 1962:* Despite White House precautions, several newspapers have by this time pieced together most of the details of the crisis. Pierre Salinger notifies President Kennedy in four separate calls during the day that security is crumbling. To keep the story from breaking, Kennedy phones Max Frankel at the *New York Times* and Philip Graham at the *Washington Post* and asks Robert McNamara to call John Hay Whitney, the publisher of the *New York Herald Tribune*. All three agree to hold their stories. (*The Cuban Crisis*, 1962, ca. 8/22/63, pp. 83a-b; Abel, p. 102; Detzer, p. 169)

*October 22, 1962—10:55 A.M.:* The State Department transmits a special "go" message to most U.S. diplomatic posts abroad instructing envoys to brief foreign heads of government or foreign ministers



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about the Cuban missile crisis. (*Instructions to Brief Foreign Minister and Chief of State on the Situation in Cuba upon Receipt of the "Go" Signal, 10/21/62*)

October 22, 1962—11:00 A.M.: Dean Acheson briefs Charles de Gaulle and delivers President Kennedy's letter on the Cuban situation. Acheson is not able to provide de Gaulle with a copy of Kennedy's speech because only part of the text has arrived. After Acheson concludes his summary of the contents of the letter, de Gaulle declares, "it is exactly what I would have done.... You may tell your President that France will support him." At about the same time, U.S. Ambassador to Great Britain David Bruce briefs Prime Minister Harold Macmillan and Lord Home, the British foreign minister. Bruce also fails to receive a complete copy of Kennedy's speech and briefs MacMillan without it. MacMillan's initial reaction upon seeing the photos of the missiles sites reportedly is to remark: "Now the Americans will realize what we here in England have lived through for the past many years." He hastens to assure Bruce that he will assist and support the United States in any way possible. (*Briefing of Charles de Gaulle by Dean Acheson, 10/23/62; Abel, p. 112; Briefing of British Prime Minister Harold MacMillan on the Cuban Situation, 10/22/62; Cooper*)

The ExComm meets with President Kennedy for a brief discussion. The president directs that personal messages be sent to commanders of Jupiters missiles in Italy and Turkey instructing them to destroy or render inoperable the Jupiters if any attempt is made to fire them without Kennedy's authorization. During the meeting, State Department Legal Advisor Abram Chayes successfully suggests changing the legal justification for the blockade presented in Kennedy's speech. Instead of basing the action on the U.N. charter, which assures a country's inherent right of self-defense in case of armed attack, Chayes suggests citing the right of the OAS to take collective measures to protect hemispheric security. In addition, Kennedy accepts Leonard Meeker's suggestion that the limited nature of the "blockade" be stressed by calling it a "quarantine." (*The Cuban Crisis, 1962, ca. 8/22/63, p. 89; Chronology of JCS Decisions Concerning the Cuban Crisis, 12/21/62; Abel, p. 115*)

October 22, 1962—12:00 noon: SAC initiates a massive alert of its B-52 nuclear bomber force, guaranteeing that one-eighth of the force is airborne at any given time. B-52 flights begin around the clock, with a new bomber taking off each time another bomber lands. The alert is directed to take place quietly and gradually and to be in full effect by October 23. SAC also begins dispersing 183 B-47 nuclear bombers to thirty-three civilian and military airfields. The Air Defense Command (ADC) also disperses 161 aircraft to sixteen bases in nine hours. For the first time in ADC history, all aircraft are armed with nuclear weapons. (*Chronology of JCS Decisions Concerning the Cuban Crisis, 12/21/62*)

October 22, 1962—2:14 P.M.: The JCS notify the State Department that U.S. military forces worldwide would go to DEFCON 3—an increased alert posture—effective at 7:00 P.M. They also state that Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (SACEUR) Lauris Norstad has been ordered to try to persuade NATO forces to assume a comparable alert posture but that he is authorized to "exercise his discretion in complying with this directive." During the day, Norstad confers with Harold MacMillan, who strongly argues against "mobilizing" European forces. Aware that an alert might weaken European support for the United States—and having received a personal message from President Kennedy stressing the need to keep the alliance together—Norstad decides not to put European forces on higher alert status. (*Document 29, Cable from Joint Chiefs of Staff Announcing DEFCON 3 Military Alert, 10/22/62; Text of Message to Lauris Norstad on the Impact of the Cuban Crisis on NATO, 10/22/62; MacMillan, p. 190*)

October 22, 1962—3:00 P.M.: The president reviews the crisis in a formal meeting of the National Security Council. During the meeting, attended by representatives from the Office of Emergency Planning for the first time, Kennedy formally establishes the ExComm. (*National Security Action Memorandum 196: Establishment of an Executive Committee of the National Security Council, 10/22/62; NYT, 11/1/62*)

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*October 22, 1962—5:00 P.M.:* Seventeen congressional leaders from both parties assemble at the White House for a briefing by President Kennedy, Secretary of State Rusk and an intelligence officer. Most express support for Kennedy's blockade plan. Others, however, led by Senators Richard B. Russell and J. William Fulbright, argue that the quarantine will not compel the Soviet Union to remove the missiles from Cuba and that an airstrike or invasion should be employed instead. (*The Cuban Crisis, 1962, ca. 8/22/63, p. 98; Kennedy, p. 55*)

*October 22, 1962—6:00 P.M.:* Secretary of State Rusk meets with Anatoly Dobrynin. Calling the Soviet missile deployment "a gross error," Rusk hands the Soviet ambassador an advance copy of President Kennedy's speech. Rusk later recalls that Dobrynin, who had never been told by Soviet leaders of the Cuban missile deployment, aged "ten years right in front of my eyes." (*Brief Summary of Dean Rusk-Anatoly Dobrynin Meeting on October 22 Prior to President Kennedy's Speech on the Cuban Crisis, 10/22/62; Interview with Sergo Mikoyan on Soviet Views on the Missile Crisis, 10/13/87; Kennedy, p. 52*)

U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union Foy Kohler calls the Kremlin to deliver a letter from President Kennedy and the text of the speech. "I must tell you that the United States is determined that this threat to the security of this hemisphere be removed," read the president's letter. (Document 27, *President Kennedy's Letter to Premier Khrushchev, 10/22/62; The Cuban Crisis, 1962, ca. 8/22/63, p. 107*)

*October 22, 1962—6:26 P.M.:* The State Department receives a letter addressed to President Kennedy from British Prime Minister Macmillan. MacMillan warns that Premier Khrushchev, in reaction to the blockade,

may try to escort his ships into the Caribbean and force you to attack them. This "fire-first" dilemma has always worried us and we have always hoped to impale the Russians on this horn. We must be ready for retaliatory action against Berlin [as well as for] pressure on the weaker parts of the Free World defense system.

President Kennedy phones MacMillan late that evening. During the crisis, the two leaders remain in close contact, speaking with each other over the telephone as often as three times a day. (*The Cuban Crisis, 1962, ca. 8/22/63, pp. 106-107; MacMillan, p. 94*)

*October 22, 1962—7:00 P.M.:* President Kennedy addresses the nation in a televised seventeen-minute speech. Announcing that "unmistakable evidence" has established the presence of Soviet MRBM and IRBM sites and nuclear capable bombers in Cuba, he states that as one of his "initial steps," a "strict quarantine on all offensive military equipment" is being put into effect. Kennedy further warns the Soviet government that the United States will "regard any nuclear missile launched from Cuba against any nation in the Western Hemisphere as an attack by the Soviet Union on the United States, requiring a full retaliatory response against the Soviet Union." According to dissident Soviet historian Roy Medvedev, Khrushchev responds to the speech by "issuing orders to the captains of Soviet ships...approaching the blockade zone to ignore it and to hold course for the Cuban ports." Khrushchev's order was reportedly reversed at the prompting of Anastas Mikoyan as the Soviet ships approached the quarantine line on the morning of October 24. (Document 28, *Text of President Kennedy's Radio/TV Address to the Nation, October 22, 1962, 10/22/62; Blight, p. 306*)

U.S. military forces worldwide, with the exception of the United States Air Forces in Europe (USAFE), are placed on DEFCON 3. ICBM missile crews are alerted and Polaris nuclear submarines in port are dispatched to preassigned stations at sea. During the president's speech, twenty-two interceptor aircraft go airborne in the event the Cuban government reacted militarily. (*Department of Defense Operations during the Cuban Missile Crisis, 2/12/63, p. 11; The Air Force Response to the Cuban Crisis 14 October-24 November 1962, 1/9/63, pp. 6-7; The Soviet Bloc Armed Forces and the Cuban Crisis: A Chronology July-November 1962, 6/18/63, p. 108*)

*October 22, 1962—7:30 P.M.:* Assistant Secretary of State Edwin Martin conducts a further closed-door

briefing for Latin American ambassadors at the State Department. At around 8:00 P.M., Secretary Rusk speaks to a meeting of all other ambassadors in Washington. Rusk reportedly tells the group, "I would not be candid and I would not be fair with you if I did not say that we are in as grave a crisis as mankind has been in." (*The Cuban Crisis, 1962*, ca. 8/22/63, pp. 108-109; Abel, p. 125)

*October 22, 1962:* The first U.S. Jupiter missile site is formally turned over to the Turkish Air Force for maintenance and operation. Although the move is publicized in Turkey and probably detected by Moscow, U.S. decision-makers apparently are not aware of the action. (*Historical Highlights: United States Air Force in Europe 1945-1979*, 11/28/80, p. 61; Garthoff 1, p. 60)

Soviet Colonel Oleg Penkovsky is arrested in the Soviet Union. From April 1961 to the end of August 1962, Penkovsky has been a spy for British and U.S. intelligence services, providing them with material on Soviet military capabilities, including important technical information on Soviet MRBM and ICBM programs. Penkovsky had been given a few telephonic coded signals for use in emergency situations, including one to be used if he is about to be arrested and one to be used in case of imminent war. When he learns he was about to be arrested, Penkovsky apparently chose to use the signal for an imminent Soviet attack. Western intelligence analysts decide, however, not to credit Penkovsky's final signal, and the ExComm is not informed of Penkovsky's arrest or its circumstances. (Garthoff 1, pp. 63-65; Penkovsky, pp. 4-5)

*October 23, 1962—8:00 A.M.:* TASS begins transmitting a Soviet government statement. At the same time, U.S. Ambassador Foy Kohler is called to the Soviet Foreign Office and given a copy of the statement with a letter from Chairman Khrushchev to President Kennedy. Khrushchev writes:

I must say frankly that the measures indicated in your statement constitute a serious threat to peace and to the security of nations.... We reaffirm that the armaments which are in Cuba, re-

gardless of the classification to which they may belong, are intended solely for defensive purposes in order to secure [the] Republic of Cuba against the attack of an aggressor.

I hope that the United States Government will display wisdom and renounce the actions pursued by you, which may lead to catastrophic consequences for world peace.

In his transmittal of the letter, Kohler notes that both the statement and the letter "avoid specific threats and are relatively restrained in tone." (Document 30, *Premier Khrushchev's Message to President Kennedy, October 23, 1962*, 10/23/62)

*October 23, 1962—10:00 A.M.:* At a meeting of the ExComm, President Kennedy approves plans for signing an official quarantine proclamation. In anticipation of a possible reaction to the blockade from the Soviet government, Kennedy directs John McCone to prepare an analysis of the effects of a comparable blockade on Berlin. The ExComm then examines the question of how the United States will respond if a U-2 aircraft is shot down. If such an event occurs and "evidence of hostile Cuban action" has been established, the ExComm decides that the SAM site responsible for the downing will be attacked and destroyed. Continued harassment of U-2 flights, it is agreed, would probably result in attacks on all SAM sites in Cuba. Following the ExComm meeting, President Kennedy establishes three subcommittees: another on crisis communications, one on advance planning, and the third on Berlin contingencies. (Document 31, McGeorge Bundy, *Executive Committee Minutes, October 23, 1962, 10:00 A.M.*, 10/23/62; *The Cuban Crisis, 1962*, ca. 8/22/63, p. 124; *Notes from 10:00 A.M. ExComm Meeting*, 10/23/62)

*October 23, 1962—4:00 P.M.:* At a special meeting of the U.N. Security Council, Adlai Stevenson issues a sharply worded statement in which he characterizes Cuba as "an accomplice in the communist enterprise of world domination." Cuban representative Mario García Incháustegui responds by denouncing the quarantine as an "act of war," and Soviet representa-

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tive Valerian Zorin calls U.S. charges of missiles in Cuba "completely false." Zorin submits a draft resolution demanding an end to U.S. naval activity near Cuba and calling for negotiations to end the crisis. (*The Cuban Crisis*, 1962, ca. 8/22/63, pp. 115-22)

October 23, 1962—5:40 P.M.: Fidel Castro announces a combat alarm, placing the Cuban armed forces on their highest alert. Cuban armed forces subsequently reach a size of 270,000 men, following a massive mobilization effort. (*Statement by Castro Rejecting the Possibility of Inspection and Noting That Cuba Has Taken Measures To Repel a United States Attack*, 10/23/62; Garthoff 1, p. 66)

October 23, 1962—6:00 P.M.: The ExComm holds a brief meeting prior to the president's signing of the quarantine proclamation. The group makes slight revisions to the proclamation and approves a new message to Premier Khrushchev. ExComm members are informed that an "extraordinary number" of coded messages have been sent to Soviet ships on their way to Cuba, although the contents of these messages are not known. In addition, John McCone states that Soviet submarines have unexpectedly been found moving into the Caribbean. According to Robert Kennedy, the president ordered the navy to give "the highest priority to tracking the submarines and to put into effect the greatest possible safety measures to protect our own aircraft carriers and other vessels." (Document 32, *McGeorge Bundy, Executive Committee Record of Action*, October 23, 1962, 6:00 P.M., 10/23/62; Kennedy, pp. 61-62)

October 23, 1962—6:51 P.M.: A new message from President Kennedy is transmitted to Premier Khrushchev via the U.S. embassy in Moscow. Kennedy, stressing that it is important that both sides "show prudence and do nothing to allow events to make the situation more difficult to control than it already is," asks the Soviet Premier to direct Soviet ships to observe the quarantine zone. (Document 33, *President Kennedy's Letter to Premier Krushchev*, 10/23/62)

October 23, 1962—7:06 P.M.: In a ceremony at the White House, the president signs Proclamation 3504, formally establishing the quarantine. CINCLANT is directed to enforce the blockade beginning at 10:00 the following morning. (*The Cuban Crisis*, 1962, ca. 8/22/63, p. 130)

October 23, 1962—8:35 P.M.: Fidel Castro tells the Cuban public in a ninety-minute television speech that Cuba will never disarm while the United States persists in its policy of aggression and hostility. Castro denies the presence of offensive missiles on Cuban soil but declares: "We will acquire the arms we feel like acquiring and we don't have to give an account to the imperialists." Castro also categorically refuses to allow inspection of Cuban territory, warning that potential inspectors "must come in battle array." (*Statement by Castro Rejecting the Possibility of Inspection and Noting That Cuba Has Taken Measures To Repel a United States Attack*, 10/23/62; OR 10/31/62)

October 23, 1962—evening: At a Soviet embassy reception in Washington, D.C., Lieutenant General Vladimir A. Dubovik appears to suggest that the captains of the Soviet ships heading for Cuba are under orders to defy the blockade. Ambassador Dobrynin, arriving late at the reception, declines to refute Dobovik's comments, saying, "he is a military man, I am not. He is the one who knows what the Navy is going to do, not I." U.S. intelligence also notes a statement by the president of TASS during the day warning that U.S. ships would be sunk if any Soviet ships are attacked. (*The Soviet Bloc Armed Forces and the Cuban Crisis: A Chronology July-November 1962*, 6/18/63, p. 50; Abel, p. 134)

At a debriefing for State Department officials, Edwin Martin emphasizes to U. Alexis Johnson the importance of preventing exile groups from creating an incident in Cuba during the crisis. Martin suggests that Johnson raise the issue of halting covert activities with CIA Director of Plans Richard Helms as well as with the ExComm. The issue of ending OPERATION MONGOOSE activities and checking the action of independent Cuban émigré groups does not, however, appear to have been seriously discussed in the Ex-

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Comm. MONGOOSE activities are not in fact shut down until October 30, too late to prevent a sabotage mission against Cuba from being carried out by CIA agents on November 8 (see entries for those dates). (*U. Alexis Johnson's Agenda for the Morning ExComm Meeting*, 10/24/62)

*October 23, 1962—9:30 P.M.:* Robert Kennedy, at the suggestion of the president, meets with Anatoly Dobrynin in the latter's office at the Soviet embassy. According to his memorandum on the meeting, the attorney general calls the Soviet missile deployment "hypocritical, misleading, and false." Dobrynin tells Kennedy that, as far as he knows, there are still no missiles in Cuba, and said that he is not aware of any change in instructions to captains of Soviet ships steaming toward Cuba. (Kennedy, pp. 65-66; Schlesinger, p. 514)

*October 23, 1962—10:15 P.M.:* Robert Kennedy relates his conversation with Dobrynin to President Kennedy and British Ambassador David Ormsby-Gore, who is meeting with the president. Robert Kennedy recalled that his brother first talked about the possibility of arranging an immediate summit with Premier Khrushchev, but then dismissed the idea as useless until Khrushchev "first accepted... U.S. determination in this matter." Ambassador Ormsby-Gore then reportedly expressed concern that the naval quarantine line reportedly has been set at eight hundred miles from Cuba. Ormsby-Gore recommends drawing the interception line closer to the island in order to give the Soviet government more time to analyze their position. President Kennedy agrees and calls Secretary of Defense McNamara to shorten the line to five hundred miles. It is unclear whether the eight-hundred-mile line is ever actually planned; diaries from the quarantine commander, Admiral Alfred Ward, show that he considered even a five-hundred-nautical mile line "excessive." (*Personal History or Diary of Vice Admiral Alfred G. Ward, U.S. Navy, While Serving As Commander Second Fleet*, ca. 11/28/62; Kennedy, pp. 66-67)

*October 23, 1962:* Low-level reconnaissance flights over Cuba begin for the first time, supplementing high-altitude U-2 photoreconnaissance. Navy and air force F-8U and RF-101 aircraft fly some 158 low-level missions between October 23 and November 15. The Soviet Union responds to the low-altitude flights by employing camouflage where possible. (*Department of Defense Press Conference of Robert McNamara*, 2/28/63, p. H-1; *Interim Report by the Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee on the Cuban Military Buildup*, 5/9/63)

Moscow places the armed forces of Warsaw Pact countries on alert. The Soviet government also defers the scheduled release of troops in the Strategic Rocket Forces, air defense units, and the submarine fleet, and it announces that "the battle readiness and vigilance of all troops" has been raised. (*The Soviet Bloc Armed Forces and the Cuban Crisis: A Chronology July-November 1962*, 6/18/63, p. 52)

Gallup poll survey taken on October 23 shows that 84 percent of the U.S. public who know about the Cuban situation favor the blockade while only 4 percent oppose the action. At the same time, roughly one out of every five Americans believe the quarantine will lead to World War III. (Detzer, p. 192)

*October 24, 1962—6:00 A.M.:* A CIA report based on information as of 6:00 A.M. states that communist reaction to the U.S. quarantine against Cuba has "not gone beyond the highly critical but noncommittal statement" issued by the Soviet government on October 23. Official world reaction is reported to be generally favorable, particularly in Latin America. Surveillance of Cuba indicates continued rapid progress in completion of IRBM and MRBM missile sites. No new offensive missile sites have been discovered, but nuclear storage buildings are being assembled with great speed. (*The Crisis USSR/Cuba: Information as of 0600*, 10/25/62)

*October 24, 1962—early morning:* Soviet ships en route to Cuba capable of carrying military cargoes appear to have slowed down, altered, or reversed their courses. Sixteen of the nineteen Soviet ships en route to Cuba at the time the naval quarantine is an-

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nounced, including five large-hatch vessels, reverse course and are returning to the Soviet Union. Only the tanker *Bucharest* continues toward the quarantine line. (*Department of Defense Press Conference of Robert McNamara*, 2/28/63, p. K-1; *Department of Defense Operations during the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 2/12/63, p. 4)

*October 24, 1962—morning*: William Knox, a U.S. businessman, has a 3 1/4-hour interview with Premier Khrushchev at Khrushchev's request. Khrushchev states that it is now too late for the United States to take over Cuba, and that he will eventually give orders to sink a U.S. vessel enforcing the blockade if Soviet ships are stopped. (*The Soviet Bloc Armed Forces and the Cuban Crisis: A Chronology July–November 1962*, 6/18/63; *Khrushchev's Conversation with Mr. W. E. Knox, President Westinghouse Electric International, Moscow, October 24, 10/26/62*)

*October 24, 1962—9:35 A.M.*: President Kennedy has a brief conversation with his brother, Robert, during which the president reportedly expresses deep concern that Soviet ships appear ready to challenge the quarantine:

"It looks really mean, doesn't it? But then, really there was no other choice. If they get this mean in our part of the world, what will they do next?" "I just don't think there was any choice," [Robert Kennedy] said, "and not only that, if you hadn't acted, you would have been impeached." The President thought for a moment and said, "That's what I think—I would have been impeached." (Kennedy, p. 67)

*October 24, 1962—10:00 A.M.*: The U.S. naval quarantine of Cuba officially goes into effect. (*Interdiction of the Delivery of Offensive Weapons to Cuba*, 10/23/62)

*October 24, 1962—10:00 A.M.*: The ExComm meets to consider the situation in Cuba. According to Robert Kennedy's memoirs on the crisis, the meeting "seemed the most trying, the most difficult, and the most filled

with tension." Robert McNamara tells the group that Soviet ships approaching the quarantine line show no indications of stopping and that two Soviet ships, the *Gagarin* and the *Komiles*, are within a few miles of the line. Naval intelligence then reports that a Soviet submarine has moved into position between the two ships. McNamara states that the aircraft carrier USS *Essex* has been directed to make the first interception, and that antisubmarine tactics, including the use of small explosives, has been ordered to prevent the Soviet submarine from interfering with the blockade.

According to Robert Kennedy, the president asks, "Isn't there some way we can avoid our first exchange with a Russian submarine—almost anything but that?" McNamara replies, "No, there's too much danger to our ships.... Our commanders have been instructed to avoid hostilities if at all possible, but this is what we must be prepared for, and this is what we must expect." At 10:25 A.M., a new intelligence message arrives and John McCone announces: "We have a preliminary report which seems to indicate that some of the Russian ships have stopped dead in the water." Dean Rusk leans over to McGeorge Bundy and says, "We're eyeball to eyeball and I think the other fellow just blinked." President Kennedy directs that no ship be intercepted for at least another hour while clarifying information is sought. (Document 36, *McGeorge Bundy, Executive Committee Record of Action*, 10/25/62; Kennedy, pp. 67-72; Schlesinger, p. 514; Abel, p. 143)

*October 24, 1962—11:24 A.M.*: A cable drafted by George Ball is transmitted to U.S. Ambassador to Turkey Raymond Hare and U.S. Ambassador to NATO Thomas Finletter, notifying them that the United States is considering a Turkey-for-Cuba missile trade. The cable states that while the comparison of missiles in Turkey with those in Cuba was "refutable," it is nonetheless possible that a negotiated solution to the crisis might "involve dismantling and removal" of the Jupiters. Each diplomat is requested to assess the political consequences of the removal of the Jupiters in a variety of different circumstances. Finletter presents his recommendations on October 25 (see entry for October 25, 1962—6:41

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P.M.); Hare responds on October 26 (see entry for October 26, 1962—1:18 P.M.). (*Possible Soviet Reaction to Cuban Quarantine and Request for Assessments on the Possible Dismantling of Jupiter Missiles*, 10/24/62)

*October 24, 1962—2:00 P.M.:* In his first communication with President Kennedy and Premier Khrushchev during the crisis, U.N. Acting Secretary General U Thant sends identical private appeals to the two leaders, urging that their government “refrain from any action which may aggravate the situation and bring with it the risk of war.” U Thant’s plea, made at the request of more than forty nonaligned states, calls for the voluntary suspension of arms shipments to Cuba together with the voluntary suspension of the naval quarantine for between two and three weeks. (*U Thant’s October 24 Letter to Kennedy Calling for a Temporary Suspension of the Quarantine and of Arms Shipments to Cuba*, 10/24/62)

*October 24, 1962—5:15 P.M.:* A Defense Department spokesperson announces publicly that some of the Soviet Bloc vessels proceeding toward Cuba appear to have altered their course. (Abel, p. 153)

*October 24, 1962—evening:* TASS releases an exchange of telegrams between British philosopher and passivist Bertrand Russell and Nikita Khrushchev. In his first public statement since the onset of the crisis, Khrushchev warns in his telegram that if the United States carries out its program of “pirate action,” the Soviet Union will have no alternative but to “make use of the means of defense against the aggressor.” Khrushchev also proposes a summit meeting with Kennedy to discuss how to end the conflict and “remove the threat of the unleashing of a thermonuclear war.” (*Text of Khrushchev’s October 24 Message to Bertrand Russell*, 10/24/62; *The Cuban Crisis*, 1962, ca. 8/22/63, p. 139)

*October 24, 1962—9:24 P.M.:* The State Department receives a letter for President Kennedy from Premier Khrushchev. At 10:52 P.M., the message is read to Kennedy. Khrushchev writes, “if you coolly weigh the situation which has developed, not giving way to pas-

sions, you will understand that the Soviet Union cannot fail to reject the arbitrary demands of the United States.” Khrushchev warns that the Soviet Union views the blockade as “an act of aggression” and that, as a consequence, he will not instruct Soviet ships bound for Cuba to observe the quarantine. (Document 34, *Premier Krushchev’s Letter to President Kennedy*, 10/24/62; *The Cuban Crisis*, 1962, ca. 8/22/63, p. 139)

*October 24, 1962:* At the direction of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, SAC increases its alert posture to DEFCON 2 for the first time in history. Thomas Powers, the commander-in-chief of SAC, believed, as he later wrote, that while discreet preparations had been appropriate before, it was now “important for [the Soviets] to know of SAC’s readiness.” Consequently, Powers decides on his own authority to transmit uncoded messages to SAC commanders noting that SAC plans are well prepared and that the alert process was going smoothly. (*The Air Force Response to the Cuban Crisis 14 October–24 November 1962*, ca. 1/63, pp. 7–8, Tab A2–A3; Garthoff 1, p. 62; Sagan, p. 108)

At the request of President Kennedy, the Defense Department drafts two separate plans to increase civil defense preparations during a possible military engagement with Cuba. The first outlines civil defense measures which could be taken in the vicinity of targets close to Cuba under attack with conventional weapons, while the second suggests measures which could be taken in response to possible nuclear attack within MRBM range.

*October 25, 1962—1:45 A.M.:* A message from President Kennedy for Premier Khrushchev is transmitted to the U.S. embassy in Moscow. Acknowledging Khrushchev’s letter of October 24, Kennedy writes, “I regret very much that you still do not appear to understand what it is that has moved us in this matter...” Kennedy notes that he had received “solemn assurances” that no missile bases would be established in Cuba. When these assurances proved false, the deployment of missiles in Cuba “required the responses I have announced....I hope that your government will take the necessary action to permit a restoration of the

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earlier situation.” (Document 39, *President Kennedy’s Letter to Premier Khrushchev*, 10/25/62)

*October 25, 1962—7:15 A.M.:* The aircraft carrier USS *Essex* and the destroyer USS *Gearing* hail and attempt to intercept the Soviet tanker *Bucharest*. Since there is no reason to suspect the ship carries contraband, the *Bucharest* is allowed to continue its voyage to Cuba. (*Department of Defense Operations during the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 2/12/63, p. 4)

*October 25, 1962—morning:* A syndicated column by the influential journalist Walter Lippman proposes a “face-saving” agreement whereby the United States would agree to remove Jupiters from Turkey in return for a Soviet withdrawal of missiles from Cuba. Many in the United States and the Soviet Union mistakenly interpret the proposal as a trial balloon floated by the Kennedy administration. (*Newspaper Column by Walter Lippman Suggesting That Both United States Bases in Turkey and Soviet Bases in Cuba Could Be Dismantled*, 10/25/62)

*October 25, 1962—10:00 A.M.:* During the morning ExComm meeting, President Kennedy authorizes the development of a program to drop propaganda leaflets over Cuba. Although leaflets are produced and approved by the ExComm, the program, later christened “Bugle Call,” is never actually carried out. (*The Cuban Crisis*, 1962, ca. 8/22/63, pp. 149–50)

*October 25, 1962—2:19 P.M.:* In his reply to U.N. Secretary General U Thant’s letter of October 23, President Kennedy avoids responding directly to U Thant’s proposal that Soviet arms shipments to Cuba and the U.S. quarantine be suspended for several weeks. Concerned that acceptance of the proposal would allow Soviet military personnel to continue work on the missiles already in Cuba, Kennedy writes only that he appreciated the “spirit” of U Thant’s message, adding that Adlai Stevenson is prepared to begin preliminary negotiations regarding the crisis. Also, during the day, Premier Khrushchev writes to U Thant to say that he welcomes and agrees with his proposal. Khrushchev notes that, like U Thant, he considered the Cuban cri-

sis “highly dangerous and requiring...immediate interference by the United Nations.” (*Letter from Khrushchev to U Thant Accepting U Thant’s October 24 Proposal to Temporarily Suspend the Quarantine and Further Arms Shipments to Cuba*, 10/25/62; *Message from President Kennedy to U Thant Stating That United States Ships Will Avoid Confronting Soviet Vessels If the Quarantine Zone Is Respected*, 10/25/62)

*October 25, 1962—2:26 P.M.:* At the prompting of the United States, U Thant sends a second message to Premier Khrushchev and President Kennedy asking them to avoid direct confrontations between Soviet and U.S. ships while the quarantine remains in effect. U Thant asks that Soviet ships keep out of the quarantine zone for a limited time and that the United States instruct its vessels “to do everything possible to avoid a direct confrontation with Soviet ships in the next few days.” (*Letter from U Thant to Khrushchev Requesting That Soviet Ships Avoid Challenging the United States Quarantine*, 10/25/62; Ball, p. 302)

*October 25, 1962—5:00 P.M.:* Dean Rusk reports on the political situation during an ExComm meeting. At the close of the meeting, CIA Director McCone indicates that some of the missiles deployed in Cuba are now operational. (Document 38, *McGeorge Bundy, Executive Committee Meeting Record of Action, October 25, 1962, 5:00 P.M.*, 10/25/62; *Nuclear-Free or Missile-Free Zones*, 10/26/62)

*October 25, 1962—5:43 P.M.:* The commander of U.S. quarantine forces, Admiral Alfred Ward, orders the USS *Kennedy* to proceed toward a Lebanese freighter, the *Marucla*. During the day, the freighter has been selected by President Kennedy as the first ship to be boarded by quarantine forces. The USS *Kennedy* informs the *Marucla* that night by radio that the ship will be boarded the following morning. (Kennedy, p. 82; Detzer, p. 230)

*October 25, 1962—6:41 P.M.:* The State Department receives a cable from U.S. Ambassador to NATO Thomas Finletter relaying Ankara’s position on the



possible withdrawal of Jupiter missiles from Turkey. Finletter reports that the Turkish representative to NATO has made it clear that his government sets "great store" by the Jupiters, and that Turkey regards the missiles "as a symbol of the alliance's determination to use atomic weapons" against either a Soviet conventional or nuclear attack on Turkey. Finletter states his belief that any arrangement that fails to substitute some other form of nuclear capability in Turkey would be rejected by the Turkish government. He adds, "in my opinion we must be most careful in working out any horse trade of this type to be sure it does not set pattern for handling future Russian incursions in other parts of the world (perhaps in other Western Hemisphere countries)." (*Turkish Position with regard to Trading Jupiters for Soviet Missiles in Cuba*, 10/25/62)

October 25, 1962: President Kennedy issues National Security Action Memorandum 199 authorizing the loading of multistage nuclear weapons on aircraft under the command of the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (SACEUR). (*The Air Force Response to the Cuban Crisis 14 October-24 November 1962*, ca. 1/63, p. 27; *Chronology of JCS Decisions Concerning the Cuban Crisis*, 12/21/62)

October 25, 1962: A CIA sabotage team, dispatched to Cuba to destroy facilities at the Matahambre copper mine in Cuba (see entry for October 15, 1962), is prevented from executing the sabotage attack by Cuban authorities. (Garthoff 1, p. 78)

October 26, 1962—6:00 A.M.: The CIA memorandum reporting information as of 6:00 A.M. notes that construction of IRBM and MRBM bases in Cuba is proceeding without interruption. (*The Crisis USSR/Cuba: Information as of 0600*, 10/26/62)

October 26, 1962—10:00 A.M.: President Kennedy tells the ExComm that he believes the quarantine by itself will not cause the Soviet government to remove the missiles from Cuba, and that only an invasion or a trade of some sort will succeed. After discussing the airstrike option again at some length, Kennedy agrees

to apply further pressure by increasing the frequency of low-level flights over Cuba from twice per day to once every two hours. The ExComm also decides not to undertake any emergency civil defense programs at this time, although preliminary measures have been initiated. (Document 42, Bromley Smith, *Summary Record of NSC Executive Committee Meeting, October 26, 1962, 10:00 A.M.*, 10/26/62; *The Cuban Crisis, 1962*, ca. 8/22/63, pp. 165-66; Kennedy, p. 83)

October 26, 1962—morning: President Kennedy orders the State Department to proceed with preparations for a crash program aimed at establishing a civil government in Cuba after an invasion and occupation of the country. During the meeting, Robert McNamara reports to the president that the military believes that heavy casualties should be expected in an invasion; several days later, CINCLANT estimates that up to 18,484 U.S. casualties might occur during the first ten days of fighting. (*CINCLANT Historical Account of Cuban Crisis*, 4/29/63, p. 56; Kennedy, p. 85)

October 26, 1962—1:00 P.M.: John Scali, State Department correspondent for ABC News, lunches with Aleksandr Fomin at the Occidental Restaurant in Washington at Fomin's urgent request. The two have met together on several previous occasions. Fomin, officially the Soviet embassy public affairs counselor, is known to be the KGB's Washington station chief. Noting that "war seems about to break out," he asks Scali to contact his "high-level friends" in the State Department to ascertain whether the United States would be interested in a possible solution to the crisis. According to Scali's notes, Fomin's proposal runs along the following lines: "[Soviet] bases would be dismantled under [U]nited [N]ations supervision and [C]astro would pledge not to accept offensive weapons of any kind, ever, in return for [a U.S.] pledge not to invade Cuba." Following the lunch, Scali goes directly to the State Department to report on the meeting to Roger Hilsman. (Document 43, *John Scali's Notes of First Meeting with Soviet Embassy Counselor Alexandr Fomin*, 10/26/62)