

THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

November 18, 1962: John McCloy and Adlai Stevenson have a long meeting with Vasily Kuznetsov and Valerian Zorin to try to force the dispute over the IL-28s to a head. McCloy repeatedly warns Kuznetsov that President Kennedy is scheduling a press conference for 6:00 P.M. on November 20, and that the United States must have a pledge that the bombers will be removed by that time. McCloy also continues to raise U.S. concerns over the lack of on-site verification, the possibility that new "offensive weapons" might be introduced into Cuba and the continued presence of four reinforced Soviet troop regiments in Cuba. Stevenson reports to the ExComm that the negotiations ended with "no indication from Kuznetsov that they would give way in regard to [the] IL-28's." (*Cuba-Meeting between McCloy and Kuznetsov, Sunday, November 18, 1962, 11/19/62*)

November 19, 1962—10:00 A.M.: At a morning ExComm session, President Kennedy authorizes high-level reconnaissance flights but again suspends low-level sorties. Robert Kennedy scrawls notes on the back of an envelope during the meeting: "President reluctant to send in low-level flights... How far can we push K[hrushchev?]." During the day, the attorney general meets with Georgi Bolshakov and warns him that low-level reconnaissance will begin again unless the Soviet Union promises to remove the bombers. Robert Kennedy states that he needs a response to the IL-28 issue before the president's press conference the next day. (*NSC Executive Committee Record of Action, November 19, 1962, 10:00 A.M., Meeting No. 27, 11/19/62; Schlesinger, p. 526*)

November 19, 1962—8:25 P.M.: Letters from President Kennedy to Charles de Gaulle, Konrad Adenauer, and Harold Macmillan are transmitted by the State Department. Kennedy warns the European leaders that if the IL-28s are not withdrawn, further U.S. action might result, including the extension of the quarantine to include POL and the possibility of an air attack against Cuba in response to attacks on U.S. reconnaissance planes. Although the overall situation is said to be "somewhat less dangerous than it was in October," Kennedy warns that getting Premier

Khrushchev to back down again in some ways might be more difficult than it was during the missile crisis. Similar messages for Latin American heads of state are also sent during the evening. (*Text of Personal Message from President Kennedy to Charles de Gaulle, Konrad Adenauer and Harold Macmillan on the IL-28 Situation, 11/19/62*)

November 19, 1962: Fidel Castro informs U Thant that the Cuban government will not object if the Soviet Union removes the IL-28s from Cuba, thereby ending the crisis over the Soviet bombers. In a letter announcing his new position, Castro renounces any claim to the aircraft, stating that the IL-28 aircraft are "the property of the Soviet Government." However, the letter warns again that any "warplane invading Cuban airspace could do so only at the risk of being destroyed" and again rejects any unilateral inspection of Cuban territory. The Cuban government apparently had been persuaded to allow the bombers to be removed by the signing of a new Cuban-Soviet agreement under which the Soviet Union would leave an instruction center on the island where Cuban troops could be trained in the use of Soviet military equipment. (Document 75, *Prime Minister Castro's Letter to Secretary General U Thant, Withdrawing Opposition to Removal of IL-28 Aircraft, 11/19/62; Alekseyev, p. 26*)

November 20, 1962: President Kennedy directs an oral message through the Soviet ambassador for Chairman Khrushchev stating that he will announce a lower state of alert for U.S. forces at his press conference. (*Kennedy Message, 11/20/62*)

Premier Khrushchev formally agrees to remove the IL-28s from Cuba in a fourteen-page letter to President Kennedy. In his letter, Khrushchev complains that during their exchange of correspondence in October, Kennedy had not made "a single mention of bomber planes.... I informed you that the IL-28 planes are twelve years old and by their combat characteristics they at present cannot be classified as offensive types of weapons." Nonetheless, he added that "we intend to remove them within a month." In a separate transmission, Khrushchev urges that

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Kennedy refrain from "hurting the national feelings of the Cubans" during his upcoming press conference. (Document 76, *Premier Khrushchev's Letter to President Kennedy, Announcing Withdrawal of IL-28 Aircraft from Cuba*, 11/20/62; Khrushchev Transmission, 11/20/62)

November 20, 1962—3:30 P.M.: After discussing Premier Khrushchev's letter agreeing to remove the IL-28s, the ExComm agrees to lift the quarantine. In addition, the SAC alert is ordered canceled and no low-altitude flights are authorized for November 21. U-2 missions are scheduled to verify the dismantling and withdrawal of the bomber aircraft. (Document 77, *Summary Record of NSC Executive Committee, November 20, 1962, 3:30 P.M., Meeting No. 28*, 11/20/62)

November 20, 1962—6:00 P.M.: President Kennedy announces at a press conference, "I have today been informed by Chairman Khrushchev that all of the IL-28 bombers in Cuba will be withdrawn in thirty days.... I have this afternoon instructed the Secretary of Defense to lift our naval quarantine." Kennedy suggests that because no on-site inspection has occurred, the preconditions for a U.S. noninvasion guarantee has not been met. Nonetheless, he states, "If all offensive weapons are removed from Cuba and kept out of the hemisphere in the future...and if Cuba is not used for the export of aggressive Communist purposes, there will be peace in the Caribbean." (*The President's News Conference of November 20, 1962*, 11/20/62)

November 20, 1962—11:21 P.M.: The JCS orders SAC to return to its normal airborne alert status, effective immediately. During the day, SAC forces lower their alert status from DEFCON 2, and other U.S. military commands reduced their alert status from DEFCON 3 to DEFCON 4. (*Summary of Items of Significant Interest Period 200701-210700 November 1962*, 11/21/62; Sagan, p. 101)

November 21, 1962—9:49 P.M.: In a cable to Adlai Stevenson and John McCloy, Dean Rusk summarizes the status of crisis following the IL-28 agreement:

The loose ends still remaining unfulfilled...are these: On [the] Soviet side, on-site U.N.-supervised verification of removal of offensive weapons, and longer-term safeguards against their reintroduction. On our side, formal assurances against invasion of Cuba.

Rusk notes that the United States favors settling the issue by having the U.S. and Soviet Union issue parallel declarations before the U.N. Security Council. The U.S. declaration, he writes, will state "our noninvasion assurances, contingent on Cuban behavior." (*Next Steps in New York Negotiations*, 11/21/62)

November 21, 1962: President Kennedy sends a brief letter to Premier Khrushchev welcoming the Soviet leader's decision to remove the IL-28s. Kennedy writes, "I have been glad to get your letter of November 20, which arrived in good time yesterday. As you will have seen, I was able to announce the lifting of our quarantine promptly at my press conference, on the basis of your welcome assurance that the IL-28 bombers will be removed within a month." Kennedy also reassures Khrushchev that "there need be no fear of any invasion of Cuba while matters take their present favorable course." (*Message for Chairman Khrushchev*, 11/21/62)

The president officially lifts the naval quarantine of Cuba, and measures are taken promptly by the U.S. Navy to return to a normal readiness posture. Secretary McNamara authorizes the secretary of the air force to release 14,200 air reservists, and the Defense Department removes involuntary extensions for the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps personnel. Almost simultaneously, the Soviet Union and other Warsaw Pact nations announce the cancellation of the special military preparedness measures that had been put into effect on October 23. (*Khrushchev's Cuban Venture in Retrospect*, 12/7/62; *Department of Defense Operations during the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 2/12/63, pp. 14, 19; Garthoff 1, p. 114)

November 22, 1962: Premier Khrushchev sends a five-page letter to Kennedy regarding the Soviet leader's views on Cuba and opinions on Fidel Castro.

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Cuban leaders, he observes, are "young, expansive people—Spaniards in a word, to use it far from the pejorative sense." Given nationalist sensitivities in Cuba, Khrushchev asks Kennedy to avoid steps "capable of causing scratches to national pride and prestige" of the Cuban leadership. (*Premier Khrushchev's Letter to President Kennedy*, 11/22/62)

November 29, 1962—10:00 A.M.: The ExComm meets with President Kennedy to discuss intelligence and diplomatic reports on Cuba, U.S. declaratory policy on the IL-28 issue, the future of OPERATION MONGOOSE and "post mortems of Oct. 15-28." Kennedy directs the State Department to prepare a long-range plan to "keep pressure on Castro." (*NSC Executive Committee Record of Action, November 29, 1962, 10:00 A.M., Meeting No. 31, 11/29/62; Executive Committee Meeting, November 29, 1962, 10 A.M. Agenda, 11/28/62*)

November 29, 1962—4:30 P.M.: In a three-hour meeting with President Kennedy and Secretary of State Rusk, Anastas Mikoyan repeatedly presses for a clarification and a confirmation of a U.S. guarantee not to invade Cuba. Kennedy reassures Mikoyan that the United States has no intention of invading Cuba, but he backs away from the idea of issuing further formal guarantees, stressing that other conditions set out in his exchange of letters with Nikita Khrushchev have not been met (in particular, international on-site verification and safeguards on the reintroduction of strategic weapons into Cuba). However, Kennedy does state that if the Soviet Union abides by the exchange of correspondence, the United States will as well. (*U.S. Policy toward Cuba and Related Events 1 November 1961 - 15 March 1963, ca. 3/16/63, pt. 3, p. 11; Garthoff 1, pp. 126-27*)

December 3, 1962—11:00 A.M.: John McCloy meets with Soviet negotiators at the Waldorf Suite in New York City. Earlier, in one of the final sessions between the U.S. and Soviet negotiators, Vasily Kuznetsov met with McCloy at the McCloy's home in Connecticut. As their talk ended, Kuznetsov reportedly said, "all right, Mr. McCloy, we will get the IL-28's out as we

have taken the missiles out. But I want to tell you something, Mr. McCloy. The Soviet Union is not going to find itself in a position like this ever again." (*Chronology of Negotiations Re: Cuban Crisis, 12/6/62; Bohlen, pp. 495-96*)

December 4, 1962—5:30 P.M.: ExComm members discuss future policy toward Cuba at a working meeting held without President Kennedy. The group reviews U.S. planning for future overflights of Cuba, apparently agreeing that continued aerial reconnaissance is necessary to verify the removal of the IL-28s and to ensure offensive weapons are not reintroduced into Cuba. When John McCone raises the possibility that another U-2 might be shot down, the ExComm decides that the United States should respond by attacking one or more SAM sites. Troubled by the potential for a new crisis arising over another attack on U.S. reconnaissance, McCone writes to McGeorge Bundy the following morning to recommend that "diplomatic measures be taken" to assure that the United States does not find itself in the position of having to attack Soviet-controlled bases in Cuba. (*Warning That the United States May Soon Face the Contingency of Responding to a Shootdown of Another U-2, 12/5/62; Guidelines for Planning of Cuban Overflights, 11/30/62*)

December 5, 1962: Stevenson and McCloy send an eyes-only cable to Secretary Rusk and the president protesting their instructions to achieve an agreement on on-site verification even though all the missiles and planes have already been removed from Cuba. The cable states that they

have the growing impression that effects of victory in public mind are being gradually effaced by prolonged and inconclusive negotiation which gives impression we are still seeking vital objective we have not achieved. If public presumes this objective is on-site verification, more and more importance will be attached to such inspection as negotiation continues. If and when we emerge from negotiation without achieving that objective, even though it may have been otherwise suc-

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cessful, we will risk seeming to have failed rather than to have succeeded. (Bird, p. 538)

December 10, 1962: Khrushchev sends a nine-page letter to Kennedy on the situation in both Cuba and Berlin. He indicates that the United States and the Soviet Union have come to the final stage of the Cuban affair. The Soviet premier then raises the issue of Berlin and attempts to drive a wedge between the United States and German leader Konrad Adenauer. "Should really you and we—two great states—submit, willingly or unwillingly, to the old-aged man who both morally and physically is with one foot in [the] grave? Should we really become toys in his hands?" (*Premier Khrushchev's Letter to President Kennedy*, 12/10/62)

December 12, 1962: In a major 2 1/2-hour speech to the Supreme Soviet—his first major address since the Cuban crisis—Premier Khrushchev asserts that a U.S. "pledge" not to invade Cuba exists. He warns, however, that if the United States carries out an invasion, Cuba would not be left "defenseless." (*The Soviet Bloc Armed Forces and the Cuban Crisis: A Chronology*, 6/18/63, pp. 115, 121–22)

At a press conference, President Kennedy tells reporters that, in the best judgment of the United States, all strategic missiles and IL-28 bombers have been removed from Cuba. (*The President's News Conference of December 12, 1962*, 12/12/62)

December 14, 1962: President Kennedy writes to Premier Khrushchev in response to Khrushchev's December 11 message. The letter thanks Khrushchev "for [his] expression of appreciation of the understanding and flexibility we have tried to display" and expresses hope that a final settlement to the "Cuban question" could be found quickly. Kennedy also discusses communications between the two leaders during the missile crisis: he suggests that the use of reporters such as John Scali is not a satisfactory method of transmitting messages and expresses disappointment that Georgi Bolshakov, the channel for many exchanges between Kennedy and Khrushchev, is being called back to the Soviet Union. (*President Kennedy's Response to Khrushchev's December 11 Letter*, 12/14/62)

December 17, 1962: In a television and radio interview, President Kennedy offers some of his thoughts on the crisis. He observes that "if we had to act on Wednesday [October 17] in the first twenty-four hours, I don't think we would have chosen as prudently as we finally did." He characterizes the Soviet attempt to install missiles in Cuba as "an effort to materially change the balance of power.... It would have appeared to, and appearances contribute to reality." Kennedy compares the miscalculations leading to the Cuban missile crisis with those misjudgments that had led to World Wars I and II. When "you see the Soviet Union and the United States, so far separated in their beliefs...and you put the nuclear equation into that struggle; that is what makes this...such a dangerous time.... One mistake can make this whole thing blow up." (*Television and Radio Interview: "After Two Years—A Conversation with the President,"* 12/17/62)

December 19, 1962: Premier Khrushchev sends a letter to President Kennedy suggesting that the "time has come now to put an end once and for all to nuclear tests." He writes, "with the elimination of the Cuban crisis we relieved mankind of the direct menace of combat use of lethal nuclear weapons that impended over the world. Can't we solve a far simpler question—that of cessation of experimental explosions of nuclear weapons in the peaceful conditions?" Kennedy responds to Khrushchev's letter on December 28. Continued negotiations subsequently lead to the eventual signing of a limited test-ban treaty on August 5, 1963. (*Khrushchev's Letter*, 12/19/62; Garthoff 1, pp. 131, 134)

January 1963: Italy and Turkey announce that the IRBMs stationed in their countries will be phased out. In addition to the fifteen Turkish Jupiter missiles, thirty Jupiters deployed in Italy are affected by the decisions. (*Annual Report of the Secretary of the Army*, July 1, 1962 to June 30, 1962, 5/20/64, p. 248)

January 4, 1963: The Standing Group, an NSC group that eventually replaces the ExComm in reviewing U.S. policy toward Cuba, discusses McGeorge Bundy's proposal of opening communications with

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Fidel Castro. Bundy later notes that the "gradual development of some form of accommodation with Castro" became a standard item in lists of policy alternatives considered by the Kennedy administration. Nonetheless, U.S. policy toward Castro vacillates considerably in the months after the missile crisis. Even as secret approaches to Castro are being weighed, the Kennedy administration also contemplates Pentagon proposals for military action against Castro, as well as a wide range of economic and covert programs to weaken the Castro government. (*Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders*, 11/20/75, p. 173; Schlesinger, p. 538)

January 7, 1963: The United States and the Soviet Union agree to terminate U.N. consideration of the missile crisis. In a joint letter to U Thant, Adlai Stevenson and Vasily Kuznetsov note that while the two governments have not been able to "resolve all the problems" resulting from the crisis, sufficient progress has been made in implementing the Kennedy-Khrushchev understanding to warrant the end of negotiations at the United Nations. Carlos Lechuga, the Cuban ambassador to the United Nations, sends a letter to U Thant two hours prior to the delivery of the U.S.-Soviet letter. Lechuga objects to the settlement, insisting that Cuba cannot regard any agreement ending crisis negotiations as "effective" unless it meets the "five points" Castro had articulated on October 28, 1962. (*Reiteration of Castro's "Five Points" and Cuban Perspective on United Nations Negotiations*, 1/7/63; Document 79, *Adlai Stevenson and Vasily Kuznetsov, Letter to the United Nations*, 1/7/63)

January 11, 1963: Dean Rusk, testifying at a closed hearing before the Senate foreign relations committee, clarifies the U.S. noninvasion assurance. The United States "never made an unadorned commitment not to invade Cuba in the first place," Rusk declared. In any case, Rusk adds that "a crucial element" in the Kennedy-Khrushchev understandings—on-site inspection and assurances against the reintroduction of strategic weapons into Cuba—was not fulfilled by the Cuban and Soviet governments. "If Castro

were to do the kind of things which would from our point of view justify invasion," Rusk stresses, the United States would not consider any non-invasion assurance binding. (*Briefing of the World Situation*, 1/11/63)

January 15, 1963: The Soviet Union makes a final attempt to obtain a firm U.S. noninvasion pledge during a meeting between Vasily Kuznetsov and President Kennedy just prior to Kuznetsov's departure for Moscow. The president declines to extend any further assurances. (Garthoff 1, p. 128)

January 15, 1963: In a lengthy televised speech, Fidel Castro declares, "for us, the Caribbean crisis has not been resolved. A war was avoided but the peace was not won." Regarding a U.S. non-invasion guarantee, Castro says, "we don't believe in Kennedy's words. But Kennedy has given no pledge and if he did give it he has already withdrawn it." (*CR*, 3/12/63)

January 25, 1963: At its first meeting in over a month and during subsequent sessions, the ExComm considers various long-range plans to pressure Fidel Castro. The United States wants Castro removed from power but it recognizes that if this proves impossible, then it wants him to be independent of the Soviet Union. Policy papers suggest that the ultimate objective is replacement of the government by "one fully compatible with the goals of the United States." (*Participation in Cuban Missile Crisis Meetings, October 1962*, 10/5/68; Garthoff 1, p. 139)

Late January 1963: OPERATION MONGOOSE begins to be phased out. The Special Group Augmented is replaced by a different oversight organization, the Special Group, chaired by McGeorge Bundy. Although Mongoose is abolished, the CIA arm, Task Force W, continues to exist as the Special Affairs Staff, located at the CIA's Miami station. William Harvey, the head of Task Force W, is replaced by Desmond FitzGerald as head of the Special Affairs Staff. Covert operations against Fidel Castro continue during 1963 under FitzGerald. In addition to continuing attempts on Castro's life over the course of the year, CIA teams

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carry out at least six major operations in Cuba aimed at disrupting the Cuban government and economy. (*Cuba, operation mongoose*, 1/28/63; *Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders*, 11/20/75, p. 170; Ranelagh, p. 388)

February 18, 1963: At Premier Khrushchev's direction, Anatoly Dobrynin delivers an aide-memoire to president Kennedy informing the president that "several thousand" Soviet troops still in Cuba would be withdrawn by March 15. No commitment to withdraw all Soviet military personnel is given, however. Unknown to the United States at the time, Khrushchev had agreed to Cuban demands to keep one of the four Soviet combat regiments in Cuba to act as a "tripwire" against a U.S. invasion. (*Informal Translation of Soviet Aide Memoire on the Soviet Decision to Withdraw Military Personnel From Cuba*, 2/18/63; Garthoff 1, p. 120)

February 21, 1963: The JCS are asked to undertake a comprehensive study of actions that might be taken in the event of a revolt in Cuba. The JCS in turn requests CINCLANT's view on several questions:

- 1) Possible military and para-military responses by the United States to a Cuban revolt...
- 3) How could we get arms and equipment to the rebels?
- 4) Under which circumstances should we consider invasion?
- 5) If the revolt were widespread and apparently successful, might we decide on a curtailed, rapid execution of CINCLANT Oplan 316 [the invasion plan of Cuba] in order to exploit in time the effects of the revolt on the Castro force? (*Addendum #1 Summary of Items of Significant Interest Period 200701-210700 February 1963*, 2/21/63)

March 21, 1963: President Kennedy criticizes recent attacks on Cuba by Cuban "exiles," saying that the raids only "strengthened the Russian position in Cuba." (NYT, 3/22/63)

March 26, 1963: The anti-Castro group L-66 attacks and sinks the Soviet ship *Baku* as it loads Cuban sugar at the harbor of Caibarien, Cuba. The assault on the *Baku*, as well as the one on the *L'Gov* a week earlier, are among the most serious attacks that have taken place during the year, and both incidents were strenuously protested by the Soviet Union and Cuba. (*Summary of Major Raids Carried Out by Anti-Castro Groups*, ca. 4/63; NYT, 3/28/63)

April 3, 1963: Sabotage operations against Cuba have been discontinued, McGeorge Bundy tells participants in a high-level administration meeting on Cuba, because the Special Group "had decided...that such activity is not worth the effort expended on it." This cessation of sabotage operations is short-lived however; President Kennedy approves a new set of operations on June 19 (see entry for June 19, 1963). (*Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders*, 11/20/75, p. 173; Schlesinger 1, p. 544)

April 21, 1963: McGeorge Bundy submits to the NSC's Standing Group a memo on "Cuba Alternatives" discussing "possible new directions" for U.S. policy toward Cuba. Three possible alternatives are identified: forcing "a non-Communist solution in Cuba by all necessary means," insisting on "major but limited ends," or moving "in the direction of a gradual development of some form of accommodation with Castro." (*Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders*, 11/20/75, p. 171)

April 25, 1963: Robert McNamara sends a handwritten note to President Kennedy informing him that "The last Jupiter missile in Turkey came down yesterday. The last Jupiter warhead will be flown out of Turkey on Saturday." On April 1, before the Jupiters are withdrawn, the first Polaris submarine is deployed in the Mediterranean Sea. No public announcement accompanied the withdrawal of the missiles, but reports that the missiles are to be dismantled are confirmed by the State Department on March 25. (*Interview with Raymond Hare by Dennis O'Brien: Jupiter Missiles in Turkey and the Missile Crisis*, 9/19/69; *Transcript of Press and Radio News Briefing*, 3/25/63;

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Handwritten Note Informing President Kennedy That the Last Jupiter Missile in Turkey Was Dismantled, 4/25/63)

April 27–May 23, 1963: Fidel Castro and a large entourage begin a five-week, fourteen-city visit to the Soviet Union. Castro negotiates renewed pledges of Soviet aid in the event of a U.S. attack as well as changes in Soviet-Cuban sugar agreements. During the visit, Castro and Premier Khrushchev review all of the documents that have been exchanged between the Soviet Union and the United States as a result of the missile crisis. Castro later reveals that it is only at this time that he learned that the withdrawal of nuclear missiles from Turkey had been part of the agreement settling the crisis. (Szulc, p. 650; Sobel, pp. 124–25)

June 19, 1963: Following a Special Group meeting, President Kennedy approves a new sabotage program against Cuba. Whereas OPERATION MONGOOSE was aimed at eventually sparking an internal revolt, the new program seeks a more limited objective: “to nourish a spirit of resistance and disaffection which could lead to significant defections and other by-products of unrest.” Numerous sabotage efforts against important economic targets are authorized by the Special Group during the autumn of 1963, and U.S.-assisted raids and assassination plots are not completely terminated until 1965 (see entries for October 3 and 24, 1963). (*Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders*, 11/20/75)

June 20, 1963: A memorandum of understanding between the United States and the Soviet Union establishing a “hot line” between Washington and Moscow is signed. The agreement establishes a direct teletype communication link to be used “in time of emergency” in order to clarify intentions and prevent accident, miscalculation, or misunderstanding from leading to unintentional war. (ACDA, pp. 28–33)

October 13, 1964: Nikita Khrushchev is ousted from power. Former KGB chief Alexander Shelpin and his

protégé, Vladamir Semichastny, reportedly instigate the action against Khrushchev. Although the Cuban missile crisis is not a major cause of Khrushchev’s fall—the majority of the formal charges leveled against Khrushchev reportedly deal with domestic affairs—his handling of the Cuban crisis may have contributed indirectly to his loss of support among the other high-level Soviet officials. (*WP*, 9/15/88; *Time*, 11/14/88)

August 4, 1970: Apparently prompted by Cuban fears of an invasion by the United States, Soviet Chargé Yuli M. Vorontsov meets with National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger some eight years after the Cuban missile crisis in an attempt to reconfirm the Kennedy-Khrushchev understanding on Cuba. Without consulting others within the administration, President Nixon and Henry Kissinger decide to “reaffirm” the understanding. On August 7, Kissinger meets with Vorontsov, and both give their word that the understanding is “still in full force.” This is the first time that U.S. leaders have unequivocally accepted the mutual commitments proposed in 1962. (Garthoff 1, pp. 141–42; Nixon, p. 486)

September 9, 1970: A Soviet flotilla, including special vessels used to support the operations of Soviet nuclear submarines, arrives at the port of Cienfuegos, Cuba. (Garthoff 1, pp. 145–48)

October 6, 1970: In an attempt to defuse increasing diplomatic tensions over the Cienfuegos “submarine port,” Anatoly Dobrynin meets with Henry Kissinger. The Soviet ambassador hands Kissinger a note reaffirming the Kennedy-Khrushchev understanding; it states that “in the Cuban question, the Soviet government continues to proceed from the understanding reached on this question in 1962.” Dobrynin also states that “he was prepared on behalf of his government to affirm that ballistic missile submarines would never call there [Cuba] in an operational capacity.” (*United States–Soviet Understanding on Offensive Weapons in Cuba*, 11/22/78; Hersh, p. 255; Nixon, p. 489)

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October 9, 1970: Henry Kissinger gives Anatoly Dobrynin a formal message from President Nixon welcoming the Soviet assurances but offering the U.S. interpretation of the 1962 understanding that settled the Cuban missile crisis:

The U.S. government understands that the U.S.S.R. will not establish, utilize, or permit the establishment of any facility in Cuba that can be employed to support or repair Soviet naval ships capable of carrying offensive weapons, i.e. submarines or surface ships armed with nuclear capable, surface-to-surface missiles.

The note lists five specific actions that the U.S. government would consider violations of the 1962 agreement. Dobrynin reportedly objects to the bluntness of the language but hints that the issue will soon be resolved. (*United States-Soviet Understanding on Offensive Weapons in Cuba*, 11/22/78; Hersh, p. 255; Nixon, p. 489)

October 23, 1970: Anatoly Dobrynin reassures Henry Kissinger that the Soviet Union does not have a military facility in Cuba and confirms that it will continue to abide by the 1962 Kennedy-Khrushchev agreement. Dobrynin also states that the Soviet Union will from August onward make diplomatic exchanges a part of the U.S.-Soviet understanding on Cuba. (*Declassification of David Newsom's Testimony on the U.S.-Soviet Understandings on Cuba*, 9/6/79)

November 30, 1978: President Jimmy Carter holds a news conference to quell the political controversy that erupts after the publication of a column by Rowland Evans and Robert Novak reporting the deployment of Soviet MiG-23 fighter-bombers in Cuba. Carter told reporters that the Soviet government has given him assurances that no shipments of arms to Cuba had or would violate the terms of the 1962 agreement. (Garthoff 1, pp. 149-50)

January 17, 1979: After reviewing the deployment of Soviet MiG-23 aircraft to Cuba, the State Depart-

ment announces it has concluded that the aircraft are not configured for delivering nuclear weapons and thus do not constitute a violation of 1962 Kennedy-Khrushchev agreement. (Garthoff 3, p. 438)

August 1979: A crisis that develops in the Carter administration over the "discovery" of a 2,600-man Soviet military "brigade" ended abruptly when it was realized that the brigade has probably been stationed in Cuba since 1962, a vestige of the Cuban missile crisis. The Soviet Union had agreed in November 1962 that the brigade would be left behind to compensate Fidel Castro for the withdrawal of Soviet strategic missiles and a large number of Soviet forces (see entry for November 2, 1962). (Garthoff 1, p. 151)

September 14, 1983: President Reagan said of the 1962 Kennedy-Khrushchev understanding: "As far as I'm concerned, that agreement has been abrogated many times by the Soviet Union and Cuba in the bringing in of what can only be considered offensive weapons." (*The Kennedy-Khrushchev Agreement Has Been Abrogated Many Times*, 9/14/83)

September 18, 1983: In response to a reporter's question, President Reagan states that his administration is actively reviewing the Kennedy-Khrushchev understanding and the question of whether the continued transfer of MiG-23 aircraft to Cuba constitutes a violation of the agreement. The Reagan administration, like the Carter administration in 1978, ultimately decides that the MiGs should not be considered "offensive weapons." (Garthoff 1, p. 152)

March 5-8, 1987: Harvard University's Nuclear Crisis Project at the Center for Science and International Affairs hosts a major conference on the Cuban Missile Crisis in Hawks Cay, Florida. The first of five such conferences organized by Professor James G. Blight, the Hawks Cay meeting brings together many of the surviving members of the ExComm, including Robert McNamara, C. Douglas Dillon, George Ball, McGeorge Bundy, Theodore Sorensen, and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., as well as the most prominent crisis

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scholars, among them Graham T. Allison, Ernest May, Joseph Nye, Richard Neustadt, and Thomas Schelling. The National Security Archive provides the documents for the conference, from which emerges a number of significant revelations—most notably that President Kennedy had secretly asked Secretary of State Dean Rusk to initiate a U.N. proposal on trading missiles in Turkey for Soviet missiles in Cuba if negotiations broke down between the superpowers. Proceedings from the conference, as well as those from a second conference held in October 1987, are later published in James G. Blight and David A. Welch's book, *On the Brink: Americans and Soviets Reexamine the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1989).

April 1987: The National Security Archive files twenty-seven Freedom of Information Act requests for thousands of pages of documentation on the Cuban missile crisis which the State Department has gathered and stored since 1965. The requests specify the file folders contained in five boxes of materials. The FOIAs are filed in the name of Professor Philip Brenner, a Cuba specialist and board member of the Archive.

October 11–13, 1987: A second conference on the Cuban missile crisis, organized by James G. Blight, takes place in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Former members of the ExComm and scholars are joined by three prominent Soviets: Fyodor Burlatsky, Khrushchev's former speechwriter and adviser; Sergo Mikoyan, son of former First Deputy Premier Anastas Mikoyan; and Georgi Shakhnazarov, a personal aide to General Secretary Gorbachev. The information provided by the Soviet participants fills a major gap in the one-sided history of the crisis; the conference results in compelling new analysis of the critical question of why Premier Khrushchev decided to deploy the missiles in Cuba. (Blight, pp. 225–90)

January 26, 1989: The National Security Archive releases substantive documentation on OPERATION MONGOOSE, the covert program authorized by Presi-

dent Kennedy to overthrow the Castro government. The documents, declassified for the first time as a result of a FOIA lawsuit filed against the State Department, offer a better understanding of events leading up to the missile crisis. According to the memoranda, CIA covert sabotage operations, combined with punitive economic measures and psychological operations, were intended to result in a popular uprising against Castro, the success of which would "require decisive military intervention" by the United States. The timetable established for Mongoose foresaw the revolt, and a U.S. invasion to support it, coming to fruition in October 1962—the month the missile crisis began. The new documentation lends credence to the argument that the Soviets and Cubans, whose agents had infiltrated MONGOOSE, believed a U.S. invasion was being planned and that the Soviet missiles were then deployed for defensive reasons. (Documents 5–9; "Papers Show 1962 U.S. Plan Against Castro," *NYT*, 1/27/89)

January 27–29, 1989: An unprecedented retrospective conference is held in Moscow. The third in a series organized by James G. Blight, the conference brings together the U.S., Soviet, and Cuban sides of the missile crisis for the first time. Besides lengthy discussion of the revelations in the OPERATION MONGOOSE documents, significant new facts about the crisis are disclosed:

- U.S. intelligence estimates of ten thousand to twelve thousand Soviet troops in Cuba during the crisis were far off, according to the Soviets. The real figure was over forty thousand.
- The Cubans expected the United States to invade and predicted up to eight hundred thousand casualties.
- At least twenty nuclear warheads were actually in Cuba but were never mounted on the rockets, according to General Dmitry Volkogonov, this is the first confirmation that the Soviets had managed to deploy warheads as well as missiles before the blockade was implemented.
- The U.S. withdrawal of missiles in Turkey was an explicit part of the U.S.-Soviet settlement of the missile crisis, according to Theodore Sorensen, who edited Robert Kennedy's memoir of the cri-

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sis, *Thirteen Days*.

- Some of Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin's cables to Moscow were transmitted via a Western Union office in Washington, D.C.

The Moscow conference proceedings were subsequently published in Bruce J. Allyn, James G. Blight, and David A. Welch's book, *Back to the Brink: The Moscow Conference on the Cuban Missile Crisis*. (WSJ, 2/30/89)

January 3-7, 1991: A fourth conference on the missile crisis, "Cuba between the Superpowers," is held on the island of Antigua. Organized by James Blight, who is now at Brown University's Center for Foreign Policy Development, the conference is once again attended by American, Soviet, and Cuban officials. For the first time, the focus is on the U.S.-Cuban and Soviet-Cuban dynamic and Cuba's role in the crisis. (James G. Blight, David Lewis, and David Welch, "Cuba Between the Superpowers: Antigua, 3-7 January 1991," Transcript of the Meetings.)

January 6, 1992: Pursuant to a FOIA lawsuit filed by the National Security Archive, the Department of State releases the remaining correspondence between Kennedy and Khrushchev. The eleven letters, dating from October 30-December 19, 1962, shed new light on the continuing tension between the superpowers in the weeks following the climax of the crisis on October 28, 1962. They reveal, among other facts, that there was no secret deal between Kennedy and Khrushchev that would have constrained the

United States from future overt intervention in Cuba. The release of the letters generates numerous newspaper articles, including front-page stories in *USA Today* and the *Miami Herald*. (Documents 64, 69-72, 76; "The Cuba Missile Crisis: Kennedy Left a Loophole," *NYT*, 1/7/92)

January 9-12, 1992: The last of five meetings, "The Tripartite Conference over the Crisis of October, 1962," organized by James Blight, Janet Lang, and Brown University's Center for Foreign Policy Development, is held in Havana, Cuba. Attended all four days by Fidel Castro, the last surviving world leader involved in the episode, as well as by former high-level officials from the United States, Cuba, and the former Soviet Union, the conference marks the apex of historical exploration of the crisis. Castro provides unparalleled accounts of his personal role in the events, as well as that of Cuba as a nation. Among the more astounding revelations that emerge from the delegation from the former Soviet Union is confirmation that the Soviets had installed short-range tactical nuclear weapons in Cuba, and that the local Soviet commander had the authority to fire those weapons without further direction from the Kremlin in the event of a U.S. invasion. (See Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., "Four Days with Fidel: A Havana Diary," *New York Review of Books*, 3/26/92; the proceedings will be published in James G. Blight, Bruce J. Allyn, and David A. Welch, with David Lewis, *Cuba On the Brink: Fidel Castro, the Missile Crisis and the Collapse of Communism* [New York: Pantheon Books, 1993])

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