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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

SECRET

February 25, 1963

MEMORANDUM TO:

Secretary of State
Secretary of Defense
Director of Central Intelligence ✓

In a follow-up to our discussion of last week, I am circulating herewith certain documents which I think may be helpful to all who are called upon to discuss the problem of Cuba either in Executive Session or in public. These documents are:

First, a compendium of the President's own principal comments on Cuban affairs. The President's statements obviously represent the position and policy of the Executive Branch, and witnesses undertaking to explain the position of the Executive Branch on policy matters should be guided by these statements.

The second major document enclosed is a report prepared under the direction of the Director of Central Intelligence with respect to intelligence on Cuba before and during the October crisis. This account represents a coordinated report, and witnesses undertaking to discuss the matter will wish to be familiar with it. Since the subject is highly classified, it is assumed that witnesses without appropriate clearance will be cautious in commenting on it, and that witnesses who are more fully informed will take appropriate precautions as to the character of hearings in which they discuss it. Discussion of any possible modifications in our intelligence procedures growing out of this experience should be avoided by any witnesses not having direct responsibility.

Finally, I am circulating copies of a public statement presented by Assistant Secretary Martin on February 18. This statement is an unusually clear and comprehensive account of the problem of subversion, and witnesses called to testify on this subject will wish to be familiar with the official position presented by the Department of State.

Attachments: a/s

M. G.
McGeorge Bundy

- Incl. 1 - Compendium (unclassified)
- Incl. 2 - Rpt fm DCI (TOP SECRET CODEWORD MATERIAL)
- Incl. 3 - Stmt by Asst Secy Martin (unclassified)

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63-15971

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

February 25, 1963

PERSONAL

Memorandum to:

Secretary of State
Secretary of Defense
Director of Central Intelligence

After hearing your comments on the draft memorandum which I circulated last week, I have decided that it is better not to attempt such a resume of agreed guidelines, subject at it might be to misunderstanding. Instead I am circulating the attached memorandum and the documents referred to therein.

Md. B.
McG. B.

CUBA

Some Presidential Comments

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FOUR AMERICANS

Press Conference - March 6, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, can you say whether the four Americans who died in the Bay of Pigs invasion were employees of the Government or the CIA?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I would say that there are a good many Americans in the last 15 years who have served their country in a good many different ways, a good many abroad, some of them have lost their lives. The United States Government has not felt that it was helpful to our interest and particularly in the struggle against this armed doctrine which we are in struggle all around the world to go into great detail.

Let me say about these four men: They were serving their country. The flight that cost them their lives was a voluntary flight and that while because of the nature of their work it has not been a matter of public record, as it might be in the case of soldiers or sailors, I can say that they were serving their country.

As I say, their work was voluntary.

CUBA I -- AIR SUPPORT

Press Conference - January 24, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, as you may be aware, there seems to be some conflict on the part of history involving the Bay of Pigs invasion. As you know, the Attorney General says that no United States air support was contemplated, so, therefore, there was none to be withdrawn.

Yet today, editor Jack Gore, of the Fort Lauderdale, Florida, News, says in a group of editors who visited you on May 10, 1961, you told them that air cover was available, but you had decided not to use it.

Mr. Gore said you told these editors that one reason for your decision was that Ambassador Stevenson had complained that any such action would make a liar out of him in the U.N. Now also today, a Mr. Manuel Penobos, who has been rather vocal for the last day or two, a member of Brigade 2506, he says that the United States military instructors of that Brigade promised the men that they could expect air cover. Out of this welter of seemingly different stories, I wonder if you can set us straight on what the real situation was?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. There was no United States air cover planned, so that the first part of the statement attributed to the Attorney General, of course, is correct. Obviously, if you are going to have United States air cover, you might as well have a complete United States commitment, which would have meant a full-fledged invasion by the United States in April 1961.

What was talked about was the question of an air strike on Monday morning by planes which were flown by pilots, B-26 planes, which were flown by pilots based not in the United States, not American planes.

That strike, as the Attorney General's interview in U.S. News and World Report describes it, was postponed until Monday afternoon. I think that the members of the Brigade were under the impression that the planes which were available, which were the B-26 planes, would give them protection on the beach. That did not work out. That was one of the failures.

The jets, the training jets, which were used against them were very effective and, therefore, we were not -- the Brigade was not able to maintain air supremacy on the beach.

So I think that the confusion comes from the use of the word "air cover", not to talk about United States air cover as opposed to air cover which was attached to the Brigade, some of which flew from various parts of this continent, not from the United States. So I think that will make it clear. As I said from the beginning, the operation was a failure, and the responsibility rests with the White House.

We engaged in extensive analysis of reasons for the failure afterwards, headed by General Taylor, who is now Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; in the Congress; the Senate Foreign Relations Committee conducted an investigation, and it seemed to me that the conduct of operations in October, 1962, were indicated that a good many lessons had been learned.

As to the recollection of the editor, there was no such conversation of the kind, at least, that has been read to me. The problem of air cover and one of the reasons that the invasion failed may have well been discussed, but only in the terms that I have described, because what I have described are the facts.

2.

Castro Allegation Against the CIA

Press Conference -- October 31, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, Fidel Castro claims to have captured some Americans whom he says are CIA agents, and he says he is going to execute them. Is there anything at all that you can tell us about this?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no.

SUPPORT OF EXILES

Press Conference -- May 22, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, are we providing any material assistance currently to any Cuban refugee organization, any Cuban exile organization?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we may well be, but you would have to make the question more precise.

QUESTION: Any arms or financial assistance on a regular basis to any specific organization?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, none that I am familiar with.

QUESTION: Mr. President, I think new legislation...

THE PRESIDENT: In addition, I don't know whether it would be a matter I would want to discuss here in any case, but to answer your question, I don't think as of today that we are. But I wouldn't want to go into details, if we were.

GOVERNMENT IN EXILE

Press Conference -- April 24, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, another point on the exile problem.

Sir: rather in line with an admonition that you, yourself, made last September, the Attorney General suggested the other day that the Cuban exiles should compose their differences and speak with more of one voice, particularly in terms of their relationship with the Government. Is there an implication here, sir, of an approval or enthusiastic approval on the part of your Administration toward the setting up of an exile government, a government in exile?

THE PRESIDENT: No, we supported the arrangement of the Revolutionary Council in order to give the exiles a voice, which we hoped would be speaking for the exiles community, in all those matters which affect their relations with the United States and the United States Government. For us to agree and support a government in exile, however, is an entirely different question, because you have -- we would want to support a government which would strike a responsive chord in Cuba, itself. The experience with governments in exile have not been particularly felicitous, historically speaking. There is no evidence that exiles themselves could develop a government which would necessarily be the government which the people of Cuba would freely choose.

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It would seem to me what would be most valuable now would be a greater degree of cohesion among the exiles regardless of their political view, and there are substantial differences among them, so that they can negotiate with us, if that is the proper word, and bring their case before other Latin American countries, in the OAS, so that we can talk to someone about the many problems which we face and the exiles face with 200,000 - 250,000 people coming into our country. But a government in exile, I think that is a different question, and in my view it would be imprudent today and I don't think it would help the struggle.

AMERICAN PRISONERS & EXILE RAIDS

Press Conference -- April 24, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, now that the 21 Americans who were imprisoned in Cuba have been released, what do you think that the U.S. policy will be toward exile raids in the future if no U.S. laws are violated, and if these raids may have some military value, perhaps done in conjunction with the underground within Cuba?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I would think a discussion of that kind of a question, if the question is as you put it, is really not very useful to the exiles, or to the cause of Cuba. It does not seem to me that public discussion of these sorts of activities is worthwhile at this time, or beneficial.

MIRO CARDONA

American Society of Newspaper EditorsApril 19, 1963

MR. HILLS: The largest number of questions today are on the subject of Cuba. There are a dozen or so asking, sir, if you would give us your views or whatever you have to say about Miro Cardona and his charges that you backed down on a promise for a second invasion, and the other things in his statement.

THE PRESIDENT: I think the Department of State has already made a comment which represents the views of the Government. Dr. Cardona lives in Miami, which is the center, of course, of the exiles, the center of their hopes. I think that a good many Cubans feel that the only way that they can return to Cuba is by military action of the United States.

We, conscious of our obligations to our own people, our own security, our alliances, our responsibilities, as I said, as the chief defender of freedom all over the world, we have not determined that it is in our national interest or in the general interest of the Hemisphere for us to launch an invasion. Naturally, that disappoints the exiles, but as the State Department said, the foreign policy of the United States, and however much we may sympathize with their desire to be free, the United States cannot launch itself into a massive invasion of Cuba without considering the worldwide implications to other free countries and also its effect upon our own position.

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Now, as to his charges, I don't think it is necessary to go through them. Quite obviously, nobody in the United States Government ever informed anyone in the Government or outside the Government, Dr. Cardona or anyone else, that we were going to launch, committed ourselves to launch, a military invasion with six divisions. We appreciate very much the fact that a good many Cubans have volunteered for the American Armed Forces. I think that they can be very valuable there. No one knows what the future is going to bring.

But I hope that Dr. Cardona and others will realize that this is not a struggle between the United States and the exiles. It is really a struggle against the Communist infiltration in this Hemisphere, and while we may disagree as to what actions we should take to remove it, and while my reactions are somewhat different than Dr. Cardona's, I would hope it would be possible for us to work together in the general interest. That is the object of this Government. We want to work with Dr. Cardona and all the other Cubans, but we must maintain the control of our policy here in the United States and here in Washington and will continue to do so.

ANTI-CASTRO EXILE RAIDS

Press Conference -- April 3, 1963

QUESTION: Would you be willing to discuss with us, sir, the political and military difficulties of preventing these hit and run raids by Cuban exiles who believe they are striking a blow for freedom?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, obviously Florida is a long coast, and it is possible for some people to go from Florida and strike at a target and come back. We have attempted to discourage it for a number of reasons. We believe it is ineffective. There was a raid conducted in Cuba, left around the 17th, I think, the evening of the 17th and 18th, that shot at a Soviet merchant ship as a target of opportunity. It returned, a number of the people who took part in came to Washington and held a press conference. It does not seem to us that this represents any real blow at Castro. It gives additional incentives for the Soviet Union to maintain their personnel in Cuba, to send additional units to protect their merchant ships. It is not controlled. No one in a position of responsibility knows about it. So that it will bring reprisals, possibly on American ships. We will then be expected to take a military action to protect our ships, which may bring a counter action.

I think that when these issues of war and peace hang in the balance, that the United States Government and authorities should -- and when American territory is being used -- should have a position of some control in the matter. So we don't think that they are effective, we don't think they weaken Castro, we don't think a rather hastily organized raid which maybe

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shoots up a merchant ship or kills some crewman, comes back, holds a press conference, it doesn't seem to us that that represents a serious blow to Castro and, in fact, may assist him in maintaining his control.

Now, I want to contrast that kind of action with action of some other Cubans, and I don't criticize these men who took part in this. They are anxious to see their island free, but we just don't feel that this advances their cause. I contrast that with some others.

For example, between 400 and 500 members of the brigade who were prisoners, who were at the Bay of Pigs, have joined the United States Army, 200 as officers and 250 as men who are now in training, and who I think will be very fine soldiers, and can serve the common cause. The head of the -- the Commander of the brigade, Oliver, who is a Cuban, a Negro, got all of his marks at 100 in joining the service. So I think there are a good many very determined, persistent Cubans who are determined that their island should be free, and we wish to assist them.

We distinguish between those actions which we feel advances the cause of freedom and these hit-and-run raids which we do not feel advances the cause of freedom and we are attempting to discourage those.

ACTIVIST EXILE GROUPS

Press Conference -- March 21, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, Radio Moscow said today that the Cuban exiles who say they shot up a Russian ship and an army camp on Monday, that these men were hirelings of the United States and were carrying out secret American orders. What have you to say to this?

THE PRESIDENT: As you know, our best information is that they did not come from the United States. We have already indicated that we do not feel that these kind of raids serve a useful purpose. It seems to me in some ways they strengthen the Russian position in Cuba and the Communist control of Cuba and justify repressive measures within Cuba which might otherwise not be regarded as essential. So that we have not supported this and these men do not have a connection with the United States Government. I think a raid which goes in and out does indicate the frustrations of Cuban exiles who want to get back home and who want to strike some blow, but I don't think that it increases the chances of freeing Cuba.

CUBA I

Backgrounder -- December 31, 1962

QUESTION: Mr. President, do you expect trouble from the Cuban refugees in the Miami area now, and especially this Brigade, in view of this policy that we have towards Cuba?

THE PRESIDENT: I am sure they all want to get back to Cuba. That is quite natural. On the other hand, the United States has a good many other obligations and concerns and responsibilities all around the world. We are involved in attempting to check the advance of the Sino-Soviet block of a billion people, so that we have to maintain a perspective which is bound to be different from theirs.

I am sure that they want us to move into Cuba. So, naturally, when we don't, there is bound to be disappointment. They all want to go home. I understand that. So I suppose they will be disappointed until that day comes. I just think that day will come, but I don't know when it is going to come.

QUESTION: Mr. President, does our intelligence indicate any significant lessening of Castro's popularity or prestige as a result of Khrushchev's pullback?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I think it does, but I don't think it indicates any lessening of his ability. I think one of the most difficult problems that we have is that the Communist system does permit,

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even against substantial popular opposition, does permit a strong degree of central control, even though public support may atrophy. It is still possible, with a rather quiescent public to maintain, with the police apparatus, the militia, the youth groups, and all the rest, to maintain, even against a majority of public opposition, to maintain control.

We have seen that in several other countries. That doesn't mean that that control is final. After all we have been through in the last decade, we have been through the experience of East Germany, Poland, and Hungary, and if it hadn't been for Soviet troops, we would have had a complete change in all those three countries. In addition, we had the break between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. We had the difficulties between the Soviet Union and China.

As I say, no one can predict what the future course will be within and without Cuba. All we can indicate are the general lines today. As I say, those Cubans obviously want to go home. They left, hoping to return to a free Cuba. But we have to consider what kind of a Cuba we will have in the future. This has to represent a choice by the majority of the Cubans themselves. It can't be just a matter of a change imposed by United States force.

QUESTION: Mr. President, how does the release of the prisoners jibe with this policy?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think in the first place -- I don't

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think that the kinds of assistance given to Cuba to get the prisoners out are decisive elements in the continuation of Castro's policy, baby foods, medications, and so on. That is not the great issue in Cuba.

Secondly, I think they were hostages and, therefore, always could be used to attempt to limit American policy. Their effort now that Castro is making that we won't release a certain number of relatives, unless Pan American begins to fly back again, that is the kind of use that he makes of prisoners. He had a particularly vulnerable target in the prisoners because of the American responsibility for their position.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DECEMBER 29, 1962

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

(Miami, Florida)

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT AND
MRS. JOHN F. KENNEDY
AT PRESENTATION OF THE FLAG OF THE
2506TH CUBAN INVASION BRIGADE
ORANGE BOWL, MIAMI, FLORIDA

THE PRESIDENT: Commander, Doctor: I want to express my great appreciation to the Brigade for making the United States the custodian of this flag. I can assure you that this flag will be returned to this Brigade in a free Havana.

I wonder if Senor Miranda, who preserved this flag through the last 20 months, would come forward so we can meet him.

I wanted to know who I should give it back to.

I always had the impression -- I hope the members of the Brigade will sit down again -- I always had the impression that the Brigade was made up of mostly young men, but standing over there is a Cuban patriot 57, one 59, one 61. I wonder if those three could stand so that the people of the United States could realize that they represent the spirit of the Cuban revolution in its best sense.

All of you members of the Brigade, and members of their families, are following an historic road, one which has been followed by other Cubans in other days, and, indeed, by other patriots of our Hemisphere in other years -- Juarez, San Martin, Bolivar, O'Higgins -- all of whom fought for liberty, many of whom were defeated, many of whom went in exile, and all of whom came home.

Seventy years ago Jose Martin, the guiding spirit of the first Cuban struggle for independence, lived on these shores. At that time in 1889, the first International American Conference was held, and Cuba was not present. Then, as now, Cuba was the only state in the Hemisphere still controlled by a foreign monarch. Then, as now, Cuba was excluded from the society of free nations. And then, as now, brave men in Florida and New York dedicated their lives and their energies to the freedom of their homeland.

The Brigade comes from behind prison walls, but you leave behind you more than six million of your fellow countrymen who are also in a very real sense in prison, for Cuba is today, as Martin described it many years ago, as beautiful as Greece, and stretched out in chains, a prison, moated by water.

On behalf of my Government and my country, I welcome you to the United States. I bring you my Nation's respect for your courage and for your cause. Our primary gratitude for your liberation must go to the heroic efforts of the Cuban Families Committee, Mr. Sanchez and others, and their able and skilled negotiator, Mr. James Donovan, and those many private American citizens who gave so richly of their time and their energies in order to save free men of Cuba from Castro's dungeons, and to reunite you with your families and friends.

Their efforts had a significance beyond the important desire to salvage individual human beings. For your small Brigade is a tangible reaffirmation that the human desire for freedom and independence is essentially unconquerable. Your conduct and valor are proof that although Castro and his fellow dictators may rule nations, they do not rule people; that they

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may imprison bodies, but they do not imprison spirits; that they may destroy the exercise of liberty, but they cannot eliminate the determination to be free. And by helping to free you, the United States has been given the opportunity to demonstrate once again that all men who fight for freedom are our brothers, and shall be until your country and others are free.

The Cuban people were promised by the revolution political liberty, social justice, intellectual freedom, land for the campesinos, and an end to economic exploitation. They have received a police state, the elimination of the dignity of land ownership, the destruction of free speech and of free press, and the complete subjugation of individual human welfare to the service of the state and of foreign states.

Under the Alianza para el Progreso, we support for Cuba and for all the countries of this Hemisphere the right of free elections and the free exercise of basic human freedoms. We support land reform and the right of every campesino to own the land he tills. We support the effort of every free nation to pursue programs of economic progress. We support the right of every free people to freely transform the economic and political institutions of society so that they may serve the welfare of all.

These are the principles of the Alianza para el Progreso. They are the principles we support for Cuba. These are the principles for which men have died and fought, and they are the principles for which you fought and for which some died in your Brigade. And I believe these are the principles of the great majority of the Cuban people today, and I am confident that all over the island of Cuba, in the Government, itself, in the Army, and in the militia, there are many who hold to this freedom faith, who have viewed with dismay the destruction of freedom on their island and who are determined to restore that freedom so that the Cuban people may once more govern themselves.

I know that exile is a different life for any free man. But I am confident that you recognize that you hold a position of responsibility to the day when Cuba is once again free. To this end, it is important that you submerge monetary differences in a common united front; that the Brigade, those who serve in the Brigade, will work together to keep alive the spirit of the Brigade so that some day the people of Cuba will have a free chance to make a free choice. So I think it incumbent upon all of you who are here today to work together, to submerge those differences which now may disturb you, to the united end that Cuba is free, and then make a free choice as to what kind of a government and what kind of a country you freely wish to build.

The Brigade is the point of the spear, the arrow's head. I hope they and the members of their families will take every opportunity to educate your children, yourselves, in the many skills and disciplines which will be necessary when Cuba is once more free.

Finally, I can offer no better advice than that given by Jose Martin to his fellow exiles in 1895 when the hour of Cuban independence was then at hand. "Let the tenor of our words be," Martin said, "especially in public matters, not the useless clamor of fear's vengeance which does not enter our hearts, but the honest weariness of an oppressed people who hope through their emancipation from a government convicted of uselessness and malevolence for a government of their own, which is capable and worthy. Let them see in us," Martin said, "constructive Americans and not empty bitterness."

Gentlemen of the Brigade, I need not tell you how happy I am to welcome you here to the United States, and what a profound impression your conduct during some of the most difficult days and months that any free people have experienced -- what

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a profound impression your conduct made upon not only the people of this country, but all the people of this Hemisphere. Even in prison you served in the strongest possible way the cause of freedom, as you do today.

I can assure you that it is the strongest wish of the people of this country, as well as the people of this Hemisphere, that Cuba shall one day be free again, and when it is, this Brigade will deserve to march at the head of the free column.

MRS. JOHN F. KENNEDY: It is an honor for me to be today with a group of the bravest men in the world, and to share in the joy that is felt by their families who, for so long, lived hoping, praying, and waiting.

I feel proud that my son has known the officers. He is still too young to realize what has happened here, but I will make it my business to tell him the story of your courage as he grows up. It is my wish and my hope that some day he may be a man at least half as brave as the members of Brigade 2506. Good luck.

END

PRISONER EXCHANGE

Press Conference -- December 12, 1962

QUESTION: Mr. President, I wonder if you could bring us up to date on what is being done to get the prisoners out of Cuba, and whether you think it is in the national interest to give food and medicine to Cuba to get these men back?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, this is being done by the private committee.

QUESTION: But is that in the national interest? Do you favor that, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: It is being handled by a private committee composed of the families of the prisoners, and a committee of which General Lucius Clay and others are members, and I am very sympathetic to their efforts.

3.

REDUCTION IN FREE WORLD SHIPPING TO CUBA

Press Conference -- February 14, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, sir, before the Cuban shipping orders were issued, there was quite a discussion about our pleas to our allies to have their shipping companies not let themselves be used as vessels to carry goods from Soviet Russia to Cuba. When your shipping orders came out, there was no mention of penalty or policy on that.

Will you tell us why?

THE PRESIDENT: There has been a substantial reduction. I think the number of free world ships going into Cuba in January was about 12. So our order has just gone out. There has been about a 90 percent drop in free world trade in the last two years to Cuba. Free world trade to Cuba, that is Latin America, Western Europe and ourselves was about 800 million two years ago. It is down to about 90 million. I think it is going to be reduced further. Our proposals have just gone into effect and there has been a substantial reduction in free world shipping to Cuba in the month of January, as I said it amounted to only 12 and is steadily declining.

TRAINING OF LATIN AMERICANS IN CUBAPress Conference - March 6, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, as you prepare for your visit to Costa Rica this month, there seems to be a position there among the Central American countries in Panama that the United States should take a more active leadership in attacking the problem of Cuba. I wonder if you could give us some of your thoughts about how you think this project should move along that you might find it possible to discuss with your colleagues there in San Jose?

THE PRESIDENT: Well one of the matters of course that is of interest to us is the question of the movement of people in and out who might be trained by the Communists in Cuba for guerilla work or even subversion in other parts of the hemisphere. This is an action which must be taken by each of the countries in Latin America. We are making proposals to them bilaterally. There has been an OAS Committee which has reported on the need for control. Now it is up to the Latin American countries, I would hope in common consultation as well as individually, to take those steps which will control the movement of people in and out. So we will know who they are, why they are going, what happens to them when they get there, when they are coming out, and what happens to them when they come out. This is the kind of thing which each country finally has to do itself because it is part of the element of sovereignty that the control of movement is

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within the country of citizenship, but we are bringing this to the attention of the Latin American countries as perhaps one of the most important things we can do this winter. In addition, there have been other things which have been done on trade, diplomatic recognition and all the rest. I think we have indicated very clearly that what we feel is the wisest policy is the isolation of Communism in this hemisphere. We would hope that the countries of Latin America with us will participate actively with us in that program.

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REPORT OF THE SCCS OF THE OAS

Press Conference - February 14, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, the Special Security Committee of the Organization of American States has reported a much more serious threat to the peace and security of the American Republics than it did when this committee was authorized at Punta del Este last January, a year ago. In view of that, I wonder if there is anything you have in mind that these American Republics could and should be doing at this time to meet that threat in a collective way?

THE PRESIDENT: I think the part of the report which is most significant is the emphasis they put on subversion in the Continent, the movement of men and perhaps money against the constituted governments. That is a matter which the United States Government is giving its greatest attention to this winter, the question of the lessening not only of the subversion that may come from Cuba, but from other parts of the hemisphere.

I consider that our primary mission for the hemisphere this winter.

SUBVERSIVE TRAINING OF LATIN AMERICANS
IN CUBA

Press Conference -- February 14, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, most of the Cuban dialogue has been confined to military personnel and military operations. Does the Government have any information on the nationals of the Soviet Bloc who may be in Cuba to train the Cubans in sabotage and subversion and political penetration of the Latin American countries?

THE PRESIDENT: I am sure that among the technicians or military people there, or para-military, there are those who are anxious to stop the flow in and out of those who may be the beneficiaries of those studies.

QUESTION: Do we have any idea of the number or any idea how we can stop them?

THE PRESIDENT; Well, the problem is to get the cooperation of other Latin American countries in limiting the flow in and out, at schools, colleges, which also includes political indoctrination. I think there were 1,200 students from Latin America that went into Cuba last year. I am sure a good many of them were politically indoctrinated; some of them obviously were given training in more direct forms of political action.

I don't think we should regard, however, the Communist threat as primarily based on Cuba, the Communist threat to the Hemisphere. There is a good deal -- there is local Communist action unrelated to Cuba which continues and which feeds on the hardships of the people there, northeast Brazil and other places. So that Cuba is important, but even if we are able to stop this kind of traffic we will still deal with the native Communist movement.

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TROOP WITHDRAWAL

Press Conference - October 31, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, can you tell us how many Russian troops there are in Cuba now and what you --

THE PRESIDENT: No, I don't think we can ever give a precise figure. All I can say is that the numbers have steadily reduced, and in the last two months there have been further reductions and since the first of January there has been a marked decrease in the number of troops in Cuba, according to all our intelligence estimates. I cannot give you a precise number that are there, but I can give you a general trend.

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TROOP WITHDRAWAL

Press Conference - August 20, 1963

QUESTION: Going back to your earlier answer on Cuba, can you say what our estimate is of how many troops have been withdrawn?

THE PRESIDENT: It is difficult for us to say precisely. But based on the information we have about outward movements and inward movements it is the judgment of the Intelligence Community that there has been a reduction in the last 2-1/2 months.

TROOP WITHDRAWAL

Press Conference - August 20, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, can you bring us up to date, sir, on the Soviet troop strength in Cuba? Has there been a net reduction in recent weeks and months?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, there has been a decline in the last -- since my last conference, I think we discussed it about two months ago. The intelligence community judges that there has been a decline, and the primary emphasis of those who remain now is in training, and not in concentrated military units.

But there are still Russians there, and this is still a matter of concern to us.

WITHDRAWAL OF TROOPS

Press Conference - April 24, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, Senator Keating says that according to his information there has been no reduction in the number of Russian troops in Cuba. He said several thousand have left; several thousand have arrived there, with no change in the over-all number since November. Would you care to comment?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. I have already said the best information we have from the intelligence community, and I rely upon the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency as chairman of the intergovernmental intelligence community for the information which I have given publicly. We attempt to ask any Congressman or Senator who has information to the contrary for his sources so they can be evaluated. I have stated that our information was, I think the last time we met, that 4,000, we thought, left in March, and that no substantial number had come in this winter. There is some evidence that some have left in April, but not a large number. Of course, the equipment itself seems to still be there, however, so that I would think there has been some reduction this winter in the number of Russian personnel on the island. There has not been a substantial reduction in the equipment. There has been no evidence, however, of any substantial introduction. It is not, in my opinion, a great question, as to whether there is 17,000, 15,000, 13,000. There are still important elements, still on the island, and there is still Soviet equipment still on the island. So I don't think Senator Keating and I are debating a serious question, unless there is a challenge on one side or the other of good

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faith, and I am sure there isn't. It is our best information that 4,000 or 5,000 have left since January, and that there has not been an equal number come in. In fact, much, much less, 300 or 400 at the most. That is our best evidence and I repeat it as it has been gathered by our intelligence sources.

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WITHDRAWAL OF SOVIET TROOPS

Press Conference -- April 3, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, two weeks ago you said you wanted to wait until the end of March before taking another look and saying something about the Soviet troops in Cuba. Do you have any new information for us on how many have been pulled out and what can be done to get the rest of them out?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we estimate that 5,000 Soviet troops left in November, immediately with the missiles, and with the bombers. And we estimate that in the last month approximately 4,000 Soviets have left. If we accept the figure which was always a rough calculation that there were 21,000, 22,000, Soviets there at the height of the crisis, we could get some idea of where approximately we think the figures are today.

It is bound to be a generalized figure because it is impossible to take a detailed head count. That still leaves some thousands on the island. We hope they are going to be withdrawn and we will continue to observe very closely in the next days, the immediate weeks ahead, whether there are going to be further withdrawals which, of course, we wish for.

RUSSIAN TROOPS

Press Conference - March 6, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, three related questions. Do you have any accurate information on the number of Russian troops who have been removed from Cuba? Are you satisfied with the rate of troop removal and was there in the Russian aid memoir any suggestion or provision for verification of troop removal?

THE PRESIDENT: No, the answer to your question would really be no to all of them.

WITHDRAWAL OF SOVIET TROOPS

Press Conference -- March 21, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, did the Soviets honor their commitment on withdrawing troops from Cuba and where do we go from here?

THE PRESIDENT: We estimate that they have withdrawn approximately 3,000 troops in these past weeks. We are waiting to see whether more will be withdrawn, as we would hope they would be. The month of March is not finished yet and we should have a clearer idea as to what the total numbers should be in the coming days.

WITHDRAWAL OF SOVIET TROOPS

Press Conference - February 21, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, now that the Soviets apparently have agreed to remove some of their troops from Cuba, do you feel that you should press for the removal of the remainder of the Russian troops in view of the fact that if they leave without their weapons, that these weapons will fall into the hands of the Cubans themselves?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Well, I would think we have indicated very clearly that we would find it difficult to accept with equanimity a situation which continued Soviet troop presence in Cuba. I think we have made that very clear. There has been, as I said, a series of withdrawals of missiles, planes, and some men. We will have to wait and see now in the coming months, and we will continue to work on the matter as we have over the last four months.

U. S. VIEW ON SOVIET TROOPS

Press Conference -- February 7, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, what, if anything, do you propose to do about the continued presence in Cuba of the Soviet military personnel? Are you just going to let them stay there?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, as you know, we have been carrying out a good many policies in the last four months, since October. We were able to effect the withdrawal of the missiles. We were able to effect the withdrawal of the planes. There has been a reduction of 4500 in the number of personnel. That was done by the United States being willing to move through a very dangerous period and the loss of an American soldier.

The continued presence of Soviet military personnel is of concern to us. I think the actions the United States has taken over the last four months indicate that we do not view the threat lightly.

WITHDRAWAL OF SOVIET TROOPS

Press Conference -- February 7, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, Mr. Khrushchev apparently gave you some reason to believe last October that the Soviet military personnel were going to be withdrawn from Cuba. That hasn't happened. My question is: Is there any official dialogue going on now to find out why the Russians are still there?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, as I say, there has been this reduction which we already described. In addition, as Mr. McNamara described yesterday, a picture of some evidence of some equipment being moved out. This is a continuing matter which is being discussed, obviously, with the Soviet Government, and we would expect that we would have clearer information as to the prospects as these days go on. But it has not been completed, and quite obviously in that sense is unfinished business.

WITHDRAWAL OF SOVIET TROOPS

Press Conference -- February 7, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, according to the recent remarks of Secretary Rusk, he said Mr. Khrushchev indicated that Soviet troops would be removed from Cuba in due course. Do you feel you have a commitment from Mr. Khrushchev in this regard, and what do you take due course to mean?

THE PRESIDENT: That is what we are going to try to find out. That was the statement that was made. As I say, that is why I think in the coming days and weeks we may have a clearer idea as to whether that means this winter or not. That is a matter of great interest to us.

QUESTION: Do you feel you have a commitment, sir, from Mr. Khrushchev?

THE PRESIDENT: I have read a statement of Mr. Khrushchev's that these forces would be removed in due course, or due time. The time was not stated and, therefore, we are trying to get a more satisfactory definition.

WITHDRAWAL OF SOVIET TROOPS

Press Conference - February 21, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, some French newspapers seem to be convinced that there is a quid pro quo arrangement between Washington and Moscow on removal of troops and other matters. Could you indicate what sort of diplomatic leverage this government has used to bring about the troop withdrawal?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. I think on November 6th, in a letter to Mr. Khrushchev, I indicated that the continued presence of troops as well as the bombers were a matter of great concern to us, and he wrote back, as I said before, in November, saying that in due course or in due time that he planned to remove those troops which were necessary to the defense of the offensive weapons.

We have been back to him on this matter several times, most recently by Mr. Rusk and Mr. Dobrynin, and Saturday Mr. Dobrynin gave the message which has been already announced. So that we have kept at it, indicating that we believe it creates tension in the Caribbean and also makes it more difficult for us to adjust our other problems between the Soviet Union and the United States as long as this is being used as a military base by the Soviet Union.

6.

MILITARY BUILD-UP IN CUBA

Press Conference -- May 22, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, there is still quite a lot of discussion in the Congress, Senator Lausche among others, on the increasing build-up militarily of Cuba. Is there anything you can say that would be in any way encouraging about the removal of the Russian troops there, or of the military situation in Cuba?

THE PRESIDENT: We do not have any evidence of increasing military build-up of the Soviet Union. I think in previous press conferences I have given an answer in response to the question of how many Russians were there and how many with regard to the withdrawal of Soviet troops. We have no evidence there is an increasing military build-up. There has not been a satisfactory withdrawal as yet. That is quite true, but we have no evidence that there is a number coming in larger than going out.

QUESTION: Pardon me, sir. I was thinking more in terms of military equipment going into Cuba.

THE PRESIDENT: I understand that. We have no evidence that there is an increasing military build-up in Cuba. The intelligence community has not found that.

ESTIMATE OF THE MILITARY THREAT

Press Conference -- February 7, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, in your view, do you believe that the Cuban threat, militarily, has increased, decreased or stayed on status quo since the removal of the offensive weapons?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, there has been, since the removal of offensive weapons, a reduction of 4,500 people, we estimate. So to that degree the threat has diminished. And, of course, it is substantially different from the kind of threat we faced in October when there were offensive missiles and planes present. There still is a body of Soviet military equipment and technicians which I think is of serious concern to this government and the hemisphere. But there has not been an addition since the removal of the weapons, there has not been an addition, and there has been the subtraction of that number of personnel.

OFFENSIVE WEAPONS ARE THE THREAT

Press Conference -- February 7, 1963

QUESTION: Now that I have your answer, I think the answer is that you do not think that it is a great military threat, but rather a threat in these areas that you speak of?

THE PRESIDENT: The military threat would come if there was a re-introduction of the offensive weapons. But the kind of forces we are talking about, which are 6,000, do not represent a military threat. Cuba is a threat for the reasons that I have given, but it is a threat -- I don't want to give the whole answer again -- but it is a threat for the reason I tried to explain to you.

EVALUATION AND IMPLICATIONS OF INTELLIGENCE REPORTS

Press Conference -- February 7, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, Defense Secretary McNamara apparently failed to convince some Republicans that all offensive weapons are withdrawn from Cuba. What more, if anything, do you believe the Administration can do to convince some of the critics?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I don't know what more we can do. Mr. McNamara went to great length. As he pointed out, he exposed a good deal of information, and also he went further than under ordinary conditions we would have liked to have gone in telling our story.

Now, he has asked, and I endorse, and Mr. McCone has asked, that if anybody has any information in regard to the presence of offensive weapons systems or, indeed, the presence of any military force or weapons on the island of Cuba, I think they should make it available to General Carroll, who is in charge of intelligence for the Defense Department -- if they would turn the information over.

Now, we get hundreds of reports every month, and we try to check them out. A good many of them are just rumors or reports, and even some of the members of Congress who have come forward either

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refuse to say where they heard the information or provide us with reports which do not have substance to them.

Now, I cannot carry out the policy of the United States Government -- on the question if obviously there were offensive missiles found in Cuba contrary to Mr. Khrushchev's pledge, it would raise the greatest risks, much greater, in my opinion than we faced in October, and we faced great risks in October. But to take the United States to that path, to persuade our allies to come with us, to hazard our allies as well as the security of the free world, as well as the peace of the free world, we have to move with hard intelligence. We have to know what we are talking about. We cannot base the issue of war and peace on a rumor or report, which is not substantiated, or which some member of Congress refuses to tell us where he heard it.

This issue involves very definitely war and peace, and when you talk about the presence of offensive weapons there, if they are there, I think the Soviet Union is aware and Cuba is aware that we would be back where we were in October but in a far more concentrated way.

Now, if you are talking about that, and talking about the kinds of actions which would come from that, it seems to me we ought to know what we are talking about. It may be that there are hidden away some missiles. Nobody can prove, in the finite sense, that

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they are not there, or they might be brought in. But they are going to have to be erected, and we continue complete surveillance. They have to be moved. They have to be put onto pads. They have to be prepared to fire. Quite obviously, if the Soviet Union did that, it would indicate that they were prepared to take the chance of another great encounter between us, with all the dangers.

Now, they had these missiles on the pads and they withdrew them, so the United States is not powerless in the area of Cuba, but I do think we should keep our heads and attempt to use the best information we have. We have got, I think, as Secretary McNamara demonstrated -- we are taking the greatest pains to try to be accurate, but we have to deal with facts as we know them, and not merely rumors and speculation.

Now, as I said, these things may all come about and we may find ourselves again with the Soviet Union toe to toe, but we ought to know what we have in our hands before we bring the United States and ask our allies to come with us to the brink again.

THE MILITARY THREAT IS NOT PRESENTLY THE REAL THREAT

Press Conference -- February 7, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, to go back to Cuba, you have said that the presence of Russian forces on the island are a matter of concern. I would like to ask this question, sir: Do you think that Cuba is a serious military threat to the United States?

THE PRESIDENT: I think we ought to keep a sense of proportion about the size of the force we are talking about. We are talking about four groups 1,100 to 1,200 men each. These are the organized military units. That is about 6,000 men. Obviously, those forces cannot be used to invade another country. They may be used to maintain some sort of control within Cuba, but obviously, are not a force that can be used externally. And in addition, Cuba cannot possibly, it lacks any amphibious equipment, and quite obviously, our power in that area is overwhelming.

I think the big dangers to Latin America, if I may say so, are the very difficult and in some cases, desperate, conditions in the countries themselves, unrelated to Cuba. Illiteracy, or bad housing, or mal-distribution of wealth, or political or social instability -- these are all problems we find, a diminishing exchange, balance of payments difficulty, drop in the price of their raw materials upon which their income depends. These are

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all of the problems that I think are staggering to which we ought to be devoting our attention.

Now, I think Castro has been discredited in the past months substantially, as everyone of our surveys in USIA show. One of the reasons has been the missile business and also the presence of Russian forces which, in a sense, seem to be police units. So that what I think we should concern ourselves with -- quite obviously, is Cuba, but Cuba as a center of propaganda and possibly subversion, the training of agents -- these are the things which we must watch about Cuba. But in the larger sense, it is the desperate and in some cases, internal problems in Latin America, themselves unrelated to Fidel Castro whose image was greatly tarnished over a year ago, which caused me the concern and why I regard Latin America as the most critical area in the world today and why I would hope that Western Europe and the United States would not be so preoccupied with our disputes, which historically may not seem justified, when we have a very, very critical problem which should concern us both in Latin America.

NATURE OF THE WEAPONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR SOVIETS OF
INSTALLING OFFENSIVE WEAPONS

Press Conference -- February 7, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, do you feel that it is possible that the defensive weapons now going into Cuba or there now, could be used for offensive purposes: For example, could not a defensive missile be used or launched from a PT boat or some other vessel?

If you do find this to be true, do you feel that any action would be required?

THE PRESIDENT: The range of the missiles on the Komar, the twelve Komars, I think, is, I believe, 18 miles. So we would not regard that as a weapon which would be used in an attack on the United States. If there is going to be that kind of an attack on the United States, then you would have an attack from places other than Cuba, and much larger weapons than a Komar torpedo boat can carry. Then you are talking about the willingness of the Soviet Union to begin a major war. If the Soviet Union is prepared to begin a major war, which will result in hundreds of millions of casualties by the time it is finished, then we all face a situation which is extremely grave.

I do not believe that that is what the Soviet Union wants, because I think they have other interests. I think they wish to

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seize power, but I don't think they wish to do so by a war. I therefore doubt if a Komar torpedo boat is going to attack the United States very soon. It is possible -- it is possible -- everything is possible. After our experience last fall, we operate on the assumption while hoping for the best, we expect the worst. It is very possible that the worst will come, and we should prepare for it. That is why we continue our daily surveillance. It is possible, conceivable.

We cannot prove that there is not a missile in a cave or that the Soviet Union isn't going to ship next week. We prepare for that. But we will find them when they do, and when they do, the Soviet Union and Cuba and the United States must all be aware that this will produce the greatest crisis which the world has faced in its history.

SOVIET MILITARY OPERATIONS IN CUBA

Press Conference -- January 24, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, there are new reports of a Soviet military buildup in Cuba. I wonder if there is any truth to this report and if it might pose a threat to our intelligence operation there, our surveillance.

THE PRESIDENT: No, we have been conducting continued surveillance. The best information we have is that one ship has arrived since the October crisis, which may have arms on it, possibly military cargo. But there has not been a military buildup in that sense of the equipment coming in from outside of Cuba. There is no evidence that this ship carried any offensive weapons.

Now, on Cuba itself, there are still -- we think that probably about 4500 Soviet technicians who were connected with the offensive weapons were withdrawn after the late October agreement. We figure there are still approximately sixteen or seventeen thousand Russians there, that the Soviets are continuing to operate the SAM sites and other technical pieces of equipment, and there are some organized units, the same organized units we have described before, which are still on the territory of Cuba. They are exercising, building some barracks. That is the kind of activity which is going on. There is no influx of military equipment, other than the ship and, as I say, our scrutiny of Cuba is daily.

SURVEILLANCE AND THE U. N.

Press Conference -- February 7, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, because we depend so much on photo reconnaissance, what would be our position if the President of Cuba should forbid that and perhaps take a protest to the United Nations about what you call our daily scrutiny over their territory?

THE PRESIDENT: I would think we would deal with that situation when it comes up . This is a substitute, in a sense, for the kind of on-site inspection which we hope to get and which was proposed by the Secretary General of the United Nations at the time of the October crisis. The United States cannot, given the history of the last fall, where deception was used against us, we could not be expected to merely trust to words in regard to a potential build-up, so we may have to face that situation, but if we do, we will face it.

ON SITE INSPECTION AND NO-INVASION PLEDGE

Press Conference -- February 7, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, what is the Administration's position now about the on-site inspections that you were insisting upon in October? Is that now a dead letter?

THE PRESIDENT: That is right. Cuba did not agree to on-site inspection unless there was inspection of the United States, which we did not agree to, as part of that was the question of the no-invasion pledge, and the rest. So there has been no on-site inspection and I don't expect to get any, and I don't expect Cuba will agree to the kind of on-site inspection that would give us more assurances than we have at the present time through photography.

NO-INVASION PLEDGE

Backgrounder - December 31, 1962

QUESTION: I wonder if we can explore the Cuban situation a little, sir, particularly in view of the language you used Saturday. This was widely held by some Cubans and some Americans to be holding out a new degree of hope of U.S. backing for either an internal upset, or possibly another invasion. Can you tell us how you look at the Cuban situation?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I think the language that I used seemed to me to be in accord with what I said at the press conference on November 19th or 20th in regard to the Castro regime, our hostility towards it, our hope for a change in the government in Cuba. It was also an effort to answer the arguments that Castro and others might make that the United States wanted to return to the status quo. Part of the speech that was perhaps lost sight of was to indicate what our political viewpoint was towards Cuba, what sort of a Cuba we hoped to see develop in following a change in orientation.

I didn't say anything about an invasion of Cuba and the United States has no intention, unless there is some aggressive act by Castro, obviously, of launching a war against Cuba or an invasion of Cuba.

QUESTION: What is the status, Mr. President, of the language about no invasion, the pledge of "no invasion".

THE PRESIDENT: As you know, our pledge was balanced off by some assurances of Khrushchev. I think the November press conference indicates our opposition to Castro. It is the policy of the United States to work for a change in the Communist regime in Cuba. It is not our intention, under present conditions, to invade Cuba, obviously, or to begin war against Cuba, providing Cuba lives in peace with its neighbors, or providing Cuba does not engage in aggressive acts.

INSPECTION

T.V. Interview - December 16, 1962

MR. HERMAN: Would there have been any breakthrough if there had been international inspection of Cuba allowed, do you think, a start, a thin edge of a wedge?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I don't think that would have materially affected it, because I don't think we would have gotten the kind of inspection which really is necessary, because a totalitarian system cannot accept the kind of inspection which really is desirable. What you are really saying is that Cuba be opened, the Soviet Union be opened. They are not going to open it, because a totalitarian system must exist only in secrecy.

MR. HERMAN: Have the inspections that we have had anywhere in the world, for example, in North Korea, or anywhere else, given you any hope that it will work as a system?

THE PRESIDENT: No, the camera I think is actually going to be our best inspector.

OFFENSIVE WEAPONS AND VERIFICATION

Press Conference -- December 12, 1962

QUESTION: Mr. President, could you define for us the term of offensive weapons in the context of the Cuban situation, and are you satisfied that such weapons no longer are in Cuba ?

THE PRESIDENT: I would refer you back to the exchange of letters between Mr. Khrushchev and myself for our definition of offensive weapons.

On the second part of your question, it is our best judgment that the missiles have been removed from Cuba, and the planes. Now, these things are never 100 percent, and it is for that reason that we are insisting on verification, or if we can't get the kind of international inspection, we will continue to use our own method of verification, which we believe gives us assurance against a re-introduction of these weapons into Cuba, and I think that the methods we are using to determine the status of military activity in Cuba are very effective, and are being used frequently.

STATUS REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF AGREEMENT
WITH SOVIET UNION AFTER REMOVAL OF IL-28's

Press Conference -- November 20, 1962

THE PRESIDENT: I have several statements.

I have today been informed by Chairman Khrushchev that all of the IL-28 bombers now in Cuba will be withdrawn in 30 days. He also agrees that these planes can be observed and counted as they leave. Inasmuch as this goes a long way towards reducing the danger which faced this hemisphere four weeks ago, I have this afternoon instructed the Secretary of Defense to lift our naval quarantine.

In view of this action, I want to take this opportunity to bring the American people up to date on the Cuban crisis and to review the progress made thus far in fulfilling the understandings between Soviet Chairman Khrushchev and myself as set forth in our letters of October 27 and 28. Chairman Khrushchev, it will be recalled, agreed to remove from Cuba all weapons systems capable of offensive use, to halt the further introduction of such weapons into Cuba, and to permit appropriate United Nations observation and supervision to insure the carrying out and continuation of these commitments. We on our part agreed that once these adequate arrangements for verification had been established, we would remove our naval

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quarantine and give assurances against invasion of Cuba.

The evidence to date indicates that all known offensive missile sites in Cuba have been dismantled. The missiles and their associated equipment have been loaded on Soviet ships. And our inspection at sea of these departing ships has confirmed that the number of missiles reported by the Soviet Union as having been brought into Cuba, which closely corresponded to our own information, has now been removed. In addition, the Soviet Government has stated that all nuclear weapons have been withdrawn from Cuba and no offensive weapons will be re-introduced.

Nevertheless, important parts of the understanding of October 27th and 28th remain to be carried out. The Cuban Government has not yet permitted the United Nations to verify whether all offensive weapons have been removed, and no lasting safeguards have yet been established against the future introduction of offensive weapons back into Cuba.

Consequently, if the Western Hemisphere is to continue to be protected against offensive weapons, this government has no choice but to pursue its own means of checking on military activities in Cuba. The importance of our continued vigilance is underlined by our identification in recent days of a number of Soviet ground combat units in Cuba, although we are informed that these and other Soviet units were associated with the protection of offensive weapons systems, and will also be withdrawn in due course.

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I repeat, we would like nothing better than adequate international arrangements for the task of inspection and verification in Cuba, and we are prepared to continue our efforts to achieve such arrangements. Until that is done, difficult problems remain. As for our part, if all offensive weapons systems are removed from Cuba and kept out of the Hemisphere in the future, under adequate verification and safeguards, and if Cuba is not used for the export of aggressive Communist purposes, there will be peace in the Caribbean. And as I said in September, "We shall neither initiate nor permit aggression in this Hemisphere."

We will not, of course, abandon the political, economic and other efforts of this hemisphere to halt subversion from Cuba nor our purpose and hope that the Cuban people shall some day be truly free. But these policies are very different from any intent to launch a military invasion of the island.

In short, the record of recent weeks shows real progress and we are hopeful that further progress can be made. The completion of the commitment on both sides and the achievement of a peaceful solution to the Cuban crisis might well open the door to the solution of other outstanding problems.

May I add this final thought. In this week of Thanksgiving, there is much for which we can be grateful as we look back to where we stood only four weeks ago--the unity of this Hemisphere,

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the support of our allies, and the calm determination of the American people. These qualities may be tested many more times in this decade, but we have increased reason to be confident that those qualities will continue to serve.

8.

Cuba and the Test Ban Treaty

Press Conference -- September 12, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, what significance do you see in the failure of Cuba so far to sign the treaty? Do you think specifically that this reflects any new friction between Cuba and Russia? Also, I was wondering whether it is satisfying to be called more imperialistic by Castro than Eisenhower was.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, lately, I have had so many things said about me that I thought that what Castro said was not particularly bad. He is attempting to demonstrate he is an independent figure. That is what he is attempting to do. I think probably he may sign finally. I don't know. We made it very clear in my letter to Senator Dirksen that if there is any breach in the treaty which involves Cuba, that appropriate action will be taken.

Therefore, this is a gesture of protest against what is obvious. But I don't put much significance on it. As far as what he says, I think it would be -- I don't know.

Cuba and the Test Ban Treaty

Press Conference - August 1, 1963

QUESTION: Do you feel that the relaxation of cold war tensions resulting from the test ban treaty might in any way affect relations between Cuba and the United States?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know what the next step in regard to relaxation of tensions are. We can't predict it. I described it as the first step in a long journey, so I don't think we should make any presumptions about what the future will bring. I think we should maintain our strength. I don't think we should cut our defense budgets. I think we should pursue, however, the next step and the next step to see if we can bring about a genuine d'etat -- we don't have that yet -- a genuine one, which covers a broad area.

What we have now is a limited test ban agreement, and we should realize it as an important step but only a first step.

Accomodation With Castro

Press Conference -- July 17, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, do you see any indications that the Castro Government is seeking a more relaxed relationship with the United States, and, if so, are we prepared to meet them in that?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I have seen these verbal statements but I have seen no evidence. As I say, I think the United States has indicated very clearly that we do not accept the existence and cannot coexist in the peaceful sense with a Soviet satellite in the Caribbean. So I don't see that any progress is going to be made along these lines as long as Cuba is a Soviet satellite.

INVASION

Press Conference - September 12, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, the American Legion meeting in Miami adopted a resolution today asking the United States to "proceed boldly alone" to end the Communist rule in Cuba, if the other hemisphere nations do not assist us, and they say that we cannot have co-existence with Communism in this hemisphere, and that there has been a lack of effective action by our government since the Castro regime began back in 1959. Could you comment sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Well, we have taken every step we could short of military action to bring pressure on the Castro regime -- shipping, trade, all the rest. It has been relatively isolated in this hemisphere. It is quite obvious now that it is a Soviet satellite, Mr. Castro is a Soviet Satellite. Finally, though, once you get beyond these words, you finally talk about military invasion of Cuba. That I do not think is in the interest of this country. I regard that as a most dangerous action, and incendiary action which could bring a good deal of grief not only to the people of the United States, but to Western Europe and others who are dependent upon us. I do not think that is wise. Those who advocate it should say it, but I don't agree with it.

Accomodation With Castro

Press Conference -- July 17, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, you stated that the United States would never agree with co-existence with Cuba as long as it was a Soviet satellite. If the Soviet troops left Cuba and if Cuba started moving towards a Titoist type situation, do you see the possibility of perhaps co-existence?

THE PRESIDENT: It is very difficult to base a future policy on presumptions which are not today realized. The fact of the matter is that the Soviet troops are there. The fact of the matter is that Cuba does follow a satellite role, and that is what we consider unacceptable to us. I would hope that the situation some day would change.

GUANTANAMO

Press Conference -- May 22, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, the Republicans have charged that some kind of agreement exists or may exist some day for our abandoning Guantanamo Bay Naval Base. Could you comment on that please, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: I think that charge indicates, as some people suspected before, that there was some political motivation in some of the attacks upon our policy with regard to Cuba. That of course is completely untrue. It has never been considered. It will not be done. And to raise that with no evidence merely because we happen to be putting in an accoustical center for improving our underwater detection system in Bermuda and strengthening a naval base at Puerto Rico, from those two actions it was deduced we must be giving up Guantanamo. I would hope that we would find a good deal more realism in the Republican conversations about foreign policies, because that is untrue. They know it is untrue. But it may be the sort of thing we are going to hear now for the next 18 months.

OAS

Press Conference -- April 24, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, there has been suggestion in the Congress that the Government, the United States Government, might use more effectively the vehicle of the Organization of American States in the Cuban problem. I know there have been certain things done there already. I understand that we are now prepared to go to the OAS shortly with a plan for intensified security measures. I wonder if you could discuss those and also whether you think there is general support among the Latin American countries for such a program.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Out of the San Jose meeting some proposals came which were amplified by the Managua meeting for providing additional security, which will be presented to the OAS. In addition, the whole Alliance for Progress will pass through the OAS machinery. The efforts we are taking on surveillance is a result of an action of the OAS. So I think the OAS is very active, even though I think we recognize the particular responsibilities we bear because of our geography and also because of our military strength.

POLICY TOWARDS CUBA

American Society of Newspaper Editors
April 19, 1963

MR. HILLS: I would like to read two others here, also on the question of Cuba.

If Castro remains in power for another five years, will the United States continue in its refusal to deal with his government?

The second one is: Two years ago tomorrow, Mr. President, you stood here and told us Fidel Castro's days were numbered. You said, "Our restraint is not inexhaustible." You said "We must not let the inter-American doctrine of non-interference conceal or excuse a policy of non-action."

Now, sir, Communist domination of Cuba is, if anything, more complete than two years ago and is stiffened by Russia. Many Americans believe our policy towards Cuba is indeed one of non-action. What can you say to persuade them that this is not so? When, if ever, is our restraint going to come to an end?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I hope our restraint or sense of responsibility will not ever come to an end.

Now, on the general question, since the last two years, the United States has taken a good many actions to contain the spread of communism in the Hemisphere. A good many nations in the Alliance for Progress, the Punta del Este Declaration, the San Jose Declaration, a number have broken off diplomatic relations; only five continue with Cuba.

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The free world trade has dropped from \$80 million to \$5 million, and an effort has been made since the San Jose conference to work with other countries to control the movement of personnel in and out of Cuba.

It is quite obvious now to the Hemisphere and to the world that Castro is only a Soviet satellite. Every study, every meeting, shows a sharp deterioration in the image he once had as a great nationalist leader and now he is generally regarded in the Hemisphere as having sold out to the Communist movement and has now become a spearhead for the Soviet advance. In addition, the United States maintains a constant surveillance. We have indicated that we would not permit any troops from Cuba to move off the island of Cuba, and fly offensive action against any neighboring country. We have indicated also that we would not accept a Hungary in Cuba, the use of Soviet troops against Cubans, if there was any internal reaction against Castro. In many ways, we have attempted to isolate Cuba and to indicate our determination to continue that policy until Cuba is free.

Now after we have done all those steps, there are two additional policies which could be carried out. I think that when those talk about Cuba, we ought to say what we want to do. We shouldn't say, "Well, let's do something," or "How long is our restraint going to last?" I would think the two remaining policies are (1) a blockade which, of course, brings us once again to a confrontation with the Soviet Union; and the other would be an invasion of Cuba. In my judgment, it would be a mistake to carry out either of those policies today.

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No one predicted with certainty what was going to happen last fall. I don't know what is going to happen anyplace in the world. Therefore, I think that we should maintain our strength and our determination, but I don't think that it would serve the interests of the United States or our allies to carry out an invasion or blockade under these present conditions.

The United States is responsible for the independence of dozens of countries reaching from South Korea to Berlin, responsible for Western Europe. It is responsible for the major struggle against the Communists in our own Hemisphere, for six percent of the world's population. We carry tremendous burdens. I do not think we can indulge ourselves at this point, if that is the proper word, in concentrating all of our material strength in one section of the world, and be indifferent to its consequences elsewhere.

I don't know -- I don't accept the view that Mr. Castro is going to be in power in five years. I can't indicate the roads by which there will be a change, but I have seen enough, as we all have, enough change in the last 15 years to make me feel that time will see Cuba free again, and I think when that happens the record will show that the United States has played a significant role. But for the present, and for a great power which carries worldwide responsibilities, I think our present policy is the right one.

If the American people decide differently, then, of course, they have an obvious remedy, but for now we intend to follow this policy.

POLICY TOWARDS CUBA

Press Conference -- April 24, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, would you care to address yourself to criticism expressed by some Republicans, including Mr. Nixon recently, about the Administration's attitude toward Cuba, and suggesting, perhaps, that we are not taking as firm a stand toward them as we should?

Would you care to speak to that, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I know there is a good deal of concern in the United States because Castro is still there. I think it is unfortunate that he was permitted to assume control in the 1950's and perhaps it would have been easier to take an action then than it is now. But those who were in position of responsibility did not make that judgment.

Now, as to what the present situation -- We have, as you know, without going through the entire list we have -- and the other countries of the free world have -- cut free world trade in the last three years from 800 million to 80 million. We are working with the OAS to set up an organization which will limit the movement of protectional guerrillas in and out of Cuba. We have -- the OAS have -- almost diplomatically isolated Castro in this Hemisphere. I think the members of the OAS have made it very clear that Marxist-Leninist and the Soviet presence is not a matter which is acceptable to the people of the Hemisphere. We have been working through the Alliance for Progress to prevent a repetition of the Cuban incident. We have made it very clear that we would not permit the movement of troops from Cuba to another country for offensive purposes. We maintain surveillance. We do a good many things.

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Now, coming down to the question which is rather sidestepped, that is if the United States should go to war in order to remove Castro, that nettle is not grasped, and it would seem to me that we have pretty much done all of those things that can be done to demonstrate hostility to the concept of a Soviet satellite in the Caribbean except take these other steps which bring in their wake violence and may bring a good deal of worldwide difficulty. If they are advocating that, then I recognize that as an alternate policy, but if it is merely a policy which says that we should do something without defining it, except perhaps as I have said, unleashing the exiles, which cannot do the job, it seems to me that we deserve in a question of this importance a good deal more precision in our prescriptions for its solution.

OIL BLOCKADE

Press Conference - March 6, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, Ambassador, or former Ambassador Guillermo Belt, the Ambassador from Cuba to the United States in the old days, said in a lecture at Georgetown Visitation Convent last Sunday that Castro would not be able to survive two weeks if he was denied Soviet oil. I wonder if there isn't something that you can do about this, or maybe bring greater pressure on some of our allies who are shipping Soviet oil in their ships to Cuba?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, but those are not our figures. There isn't any doubt that over a long period of time that denial of oil would make a difference. To deny the oil would require, of course, a blockade, and a blockade is an act of war, and you should be prepared to go for it. I think we indicated last October that in periods where we considered the United States was in danger, we were prepared to go as far as was needed to remove that danger, and we would, of course, be willing always to do so again, if we felt there was a situation which carried with it that kind of danger to the United States.

But you should not be under any impression that a blockade is not an act of war, because when a ship refuses to stop, and then you then sink the ship, there is usually a military response by the country involved. We are attempting to persuade NATO and other countries not to ship to Cuba,

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but the primary source of shipments into Cuba are bloc ships, and at this time we do not believe that war in the Caribbean is to the national advantage.

NEGOTIATIONS WITH CUBAPress Conference - March 6, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, yesterday UN Secretary General U Thant received a letter from the Cuban Foreign Minister in which Roa hinted that the Cubans might like to discuss the resumption of friendly relations with us. I wonder if you think that this might be possible, and if so, what conditions would have to be met first?

THE PRESIDENT: I understand the note had some reference to it from Havana but the note actually delivered from the U.N. did not have any such reference. We have had no indication that there is a desire to resume friendly relations with us. We have said on many occasions that we regard the present Soviet presence in Cuba as unacceptable to us and we regard the Communization of Cuba and the attempt to subvert the hemisphere as matters which are not negotiable. I don't see any evidence that there is in prospect a normalization of relations between Cuba and the United States.

ELIMINATING COMMUNISM

Press Conference -- February 7, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, what chances do you think or do you believe there are of eliminating communism in Cuba within your term?

THE PRESIDENT: I couldn't make any prediction about the elimination. I am quite obviously hopeful it can be eliminated, but we have to wait and see what happens. There are a lot of unpleasant situations in the world today. China is one. It is unfortunate that communism was permitted to come into Cuba. It has been a problem in the last five years. We don't know what is going to happen internally. There is no obviously easy solution as to how the Communist movement will be removed. One way, of course, would be by the Cubans themselves, though that is very difficult, given the police setup.

The other way would be by external action. But that is war and we should not regard that as a cheap or easy way to accomplish what we wish. We live with a lot of dangerous situations all over the world. Berlin is one. There are many others. And we live with a good deal of hazard all around the world and have for 15 years. I cannot set down any time in which I can clearly see the end to the Castro regime. I believe it is going to come, but I couldn't possibly give a time limit. I think that those who do sometimes mislead. I remember a good deal of talk in the early '50's about liberation, how Eastern Europe was going to be liberated. Then we had Hungary, Poland, and East Germany and no action was taken.

The reason action wasn't taken was that they felt strongly if they did take action it would bring on another war. It is quite easy to discuss these things and say one thing or another ought to be done. But when they start talking about how, and when, they start talking about Americans invading Cuba and killing thousands of Cubans and Americans, with all the hazards around the world, that is a very serious decision, and I notice that that is not approached directly by a good many who have discussed the problem.

General Policy Towards Cuba - Invasion & Internal Situation

Backgrounder -- December 31, 1962

QUESTION: There has been some suggestion that our policy now is going to verge towards co-existence and the implication in that phrase seems to be that we are going to be more peaceful than before, or more friendly.

THE PRESIDENT: I think the press conference statement, plus the speech I made the other day, I think, indicates that that is not our policy. We are opposed to Communist control of Cuba, to the intimate association of the Soviet Union, and we hope for a change. American policies are directed toward that end and will be. No one can predict what is going to happen in Cuba, but I think all of the last 20 years have been filled with situations which were unpredictable. Nobody would have predicted a year ago, or two years, or perhaps three years ago, that we would have a war between the Chinese and the Indians.

There are a good many things which have happened in the last three or four years which could not have been predicted in '57 and '58. No one can predict what the exact course of events will be in Cuba, what movement will take place there. So I think that all we can set down now is a general attitude of the United States towards Castro, which I think we have indicated

our opposition to Castro, and also an indication of our willingness to support any free choice that the Cuban people may make following Castro, to hold out a hope to the people in Cuba, in and out of the government, that the United States would be sympathetic to a change within Cuba. We can't, it seems to me, under present conditions, go further than that.

QUESTION: Are we ready to provide any more help to those inside Cuba who may be anti-Castro?

THE PRESIDENT: What kind?

QUESTION: In any fashion; that is, beyond moral encouragement?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think, as I say, the United States is not planning to support an invasion of Cuba. We have made that clear. There may be other things.

QUESTION: I was thinking of non-invasion; that is, of elements within the country who might be interested in guerrilla action or other unrest that might eventually lead to Castro's overthrow. I wonder if we may now be prepared --

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think it would probably not be helpful to go into a discussion of it. As I said, I think all I can indicate today is that we oppose the regime for the reasons which have been given, and that we cannot predict with certainty what the future course of events will be in Cuba.

We have indicated that we are not planning to declare war on Cuba, or begin an invasion of Cuba, if Cuba, itself, does not engage in aggressive acts against other members of the Hemisphere.

QUESTION: Mr. President, how do you define aggressive acts? Would that include or exclude subversion in other countries?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think we will just let it go with the language I have used.

QUESTION: Is it your hope, then, sir, that Castro may fall of his own weight or that people inside may revolt?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I don't think we can tell. I don't know. We can't tell what is going to happen.

QUESTION: Mr. President, is this what you are trying to do, to let the Cuban people know that if they get something going on their own, that we are all for it?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think we want to be in the position of looking as if we are encouraging a -- I think I would have to limit myself to saying that the United States is opposed to the regime, that it is not planning to invade Cuba, providing Cuba, itself, conducts its policy within the limitations which we have given. But we are also anxious that the Cuban people and those within and without the armed forces of Cuba and the government, who desire a Cuba which is not closely tied to the bloc, who may desire a Cuba which is different from the pre-Castro Cuba, that the United States is sympathetic to that.

I can't tell what is going to happen in Cuba or in the Caribbean. This is all we can do, it seems to me, at the end of this year. Nobody can predict.

QUESTION: Mr. President, you said at one point a few minutes ago that we would not support another invasion. You meant that not only would we not invade them, but we would not get involved in the backing of another invasion?

THE PRESIDENT: I think really that is an academic question, because who can invade Cuba? I mean, there is no force that can carry out a successful invasion of Cuba if the United States was not involved in it. The United States, as I said at my press conference in November, the United States is not planning to invade Cuba, and no other countries can engage in an invasion of Cuba because it would be a major military effort.

General Policy Towards Cuba - Invasion & Internal Situation

Backgrounder -- December 31, 1962

QUESTION: Mr. President, does our intelligence indicate any significant lessening of Castro's popularity or prestige as a result of Khrushchev's pullback?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I think it does, but I don't think it indicates any lessening of his ability. I think one of the most difficult problems that we have is that the Communist system does permit, even against substantial popular opposition, does permit a strong degree of central control, even though public support may atrophy. It is still possible, with a rather quiescent public to maintain, with the police apparatus, the militia, the youth groups, and all the rest, to maintain, even against a majority of public opposition, to maintain control.

We have seen that in several other countries. That doesn't mean that that control is final. After all, we have been through in the last decade, we have been through the experience of East Germany, Poland, and Hungary, and if it hadn't been for Soviet troops, we would have had a complete change in all those three countries. In addition, we had the break between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. We had the difficulties between the Soviet Union and China.

As I say, no one can predict what the future course will be within and without Cuba. All we can indicate are the general lines today. As I say, those Cubans obviously want to go home. They left, hoping to return

to a free Cuba. But we have to consider what kind of a Cuba we will have in the future. This has to represent a choice by the majority of the Cubans themselves. It can't be just a matter of a change imposed by United States force.

General Policy Towards Cuba - Invasion & Internal Situation

Backgrounder -- December 31, 1962

QUESTION: Mr. President, right after the Cuban confrontation with the Soviet Union, there was considerable discussion about this having been a turning point in our relations with the Communists. Do you see, since then, any evidence of changes that are going to be long-term?

THE PRESIDENT: As I say, I think our problem is -- well, in the first place, I think the promise of communism has been exposed as a failure in many ways. I don't overstate that. In some ways they have been able to mobilize their resources quite effectively for a given purpose. But I would say that the bubble, or the concept of communism is an almost inevitable development in history which I think was more generally held after Sputnik and after '57 and '58, which was the time of the great leap forward, Cuba, after the revolution in Cuba, in, say, '59, when it began to move in a more obvious hostility to the United States, and in the Communist direction, I would say that since then the glow has gone out of it.

On the other hand, there still is this ability to maintain the police structure quite effectively. As I say, we have seen evidences where it cracked in the 50's, and without Soviet intervention, it would have cracked completely in these countries. I don't overstate it, but at least in Cuba, so far, and North Viet-Nam, North Korea, they have not been able to maintain their power.

But nobody can sit here today and say what is going to happen in Cuba. No one could say six months ago that what has happened in the last six months was going to happen. So I don't think we are able to lift the curtain on Cuba and say that this is going to happen month by month. That doesn't mean that with the frictions and tensions which a Communist system of government brings, a sort of wholesale exodus of the refugees, is only an example of the tensions that are there.

I would say that I believe that Cuba is going to be non-Communist sometime. There still is this problem of having great distress throughout the world, great poverty, a terribly low standard of living, which give the Communists an alternative to present dark reality and then when the Communists get in, even though they fail, because of the police apparatus, they are able to hold their power. That is one of the big problems we have.

If we get a free choice made after the Communists get in, you have no worries, because I don't think they can do the job of delivering. But they can maintain their power pretty effectively, as is being proved in several areas of the world. I would say that is the matter of greatest concern, our ability to get them out, once they are in, even though they fail to deliver.

QUESTION: What about the strain that the Cuban confrontation has put on --

THE PRESIDENT: But your question was about what changes. I don't know, but I think that probably, as I say, we have had two or three major clashes with the Communists which could have escalated. Laos, if we

hadn't gotten a cease-fire, might have escalated. Cuba could have escalated. Berlin, when he stated at Geneva that he was going to take Berlin, that could have escalated.

In 24 months we have had three situations which could be very dangerous. That is rather unhealthy in a nuclear age. I don't think we can say that Cuba is the turning point or the changing period, but I do think that the fall of 1962, the Sino-Indian struggle, the Sino-Soviet dispute, the Soviet-United States clash over Cuba, is bound to have its effects, even though they can't be fully perceived now.

THE RIGHT TO INVADE & THE U. N.

Press Conference -- November 20, 1962

QUESTION: Mr. President, sir would you please clear up for us our relationship with the United Nations? If we wanted to invade Cuba, if we wanted to take unilateral action in any way, could we do so without the approval of United Nations?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I don't think a question -- you would have to really give me a much more detailed hypothetical question before I could consider answering it, and even under those conditions it might not be wise. Obviously, the United States, let's use a hypothetical case, which is always better. The United States has the means as a sovereign power to defend itself, and of course exercises that power. It has in the past and would in the future. We would have to hope to exercise it in a way consistent with our treaty obligations, including the United Nations Charter. But we of course keep to ourselves and hold to ourselves under the United States Constitution and under the laws of international law, the right to defend our security, on our own, if necessary, though as I say we hope to always move in concert with our allies, but on our own if that situation was necessary to protect our survival or integrity, or other vital interests.

9.

Secret Agreement with USSR

Press Conference - September 12, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, in a Chicago speech last night, Senator Goldwater said there are not ten men in America who know the full truth about Cuba, all the facts of the test ban treaty, or the commitments made on behalf of this Nation with governments dedicated to our destruction. He seems to be hinting that you made secret agreements both in the Cuban settlement last fall, and to obtain the test ban treaty.

THE PRESIDENT: No, that is not ---

QUESTION: Could you say unequivocally that there were no commitments or would you care to comment on Senator Goldwater's comments?

THE PRESIDENT: There are no commitments, and I think Senator Goldwater is at least one of the ten men in America who would know that is not true. I think there are a good many other men. The fact is, as you know, we offered to have the correspondence on the test ban treaty made available to the leadership of the senate. It stands on its own. So I can tell you very flatly there were no commitments made that have not been discussed and revealed. I think most people know that.

INTELLIGENCE GAPPress Conference - March 6, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, of late, some of your Congressional critics have started to charge that your Administration has been deliberately withholding important information on the Cuban situation. Among the claims that have been made is that your Central Intelligence chief, John McCone, actually knew before October 14th that the Soviets had planted offensive missiles in Cuba. Is there anything that you can say on this?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I have seen charges of all kinds, one day distinguished Republican charges that it is all the CIA's fault, and the next day it is the Defense Department's fault, and the next day the CIA is being made a scapegoat by another distinguished leader. So that we could not possibly answer these charges, which come so fast and so furiously. Mr. Arens said the other day that the testimony by the Air Force before the committee indicated that we knew all about this October 10th, even though General LeMay made it very clear in the same testimony that the Air Force didn't have such information. So we are not in a position to answer these.

I think in hindsight, I suppose we could have always perhaps picked up these missile bases a few days earlier, but not very many days earlier, because the missiles didn't come in, at least in hindsight it now appears, until some time around the middle of September. The

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installation began at a later date. They were very fast, and I think the photography on the same areas, if we had known that missiles were going in, 10 days before might not have picked up anything. The week before might have picked up something. In the pictures taken October 14th were only obvious to the most sophisticated expert. It was not until the pictures taken really the 16th and 17th that you had pictures that would be generally acceptable. So this was a very clandestine and fast operation. So I feel that the intelligence services did a very good job. When you think that the job was done, the missiles were discovered, the missiles were removed, the bombers were discovered, the bombers were removed, I don't think that anybody should feel that anything but a good job was done. But I think we can always improve, and particularly with the advantage of hindsight. I am satisfied with Mr. McCone, the intelligence community, the Defense Department and the job they did in those days particularly taken in totality.

SHRIMP BOAT INCIDENT

Press Conference - February 21, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, would it be possible to say, sir, in the event of future attacks upon our shipping in the Carribean whether we would turn to the doct rine of hot pursuit?

THE PRESIDENT: I would prefer to leave our status as I have described it, and to make judgments as they come along. We have made it very clear now that the United States will take action against any vessel or plane which attacks our planes or vessels. But the details of those standing engagements, I think, can wait on events. But there will be an initial response. How far the pursuit would go, and all the rest is a matter which I think the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Secretary of State, we all might consider as the sttuation develops, and as we see whether today's action was an isolated incident, the result of a pilot decision, or was a deliberate decision by the Cuban Government which forecasts other attacks. I would think we have got a clearer pattern, then we could make a judgment on whether hot pursuit should be carried out to the shores of Cuba.

SHRIMP BOAT INCIDENT

Press Conference - February 21, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, the Defense Department announcement on the incident in the Florida Straits said simply that the MIG's fired near the shrimp boats.

THE PRESIDENT: That is correct.

QUESTION: And you used the term "attack." Did these MIG's attack the boat and miss or did they harass the boat?

THE PRESIDENT: That is a -- I don't think we have the answer to that question. I think the shots came within -- what? 40 yards of the boat. I would think, if you are on the boat, that is regarded as an attack, and whether they were trying to hit the boat or whether they were merely attempting to target practice -- all these things, I think, we will have to look at in the next day or so.

SHRIMP BOAT INCIDENT

Press Conference - February 21, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, in view of the action of the Cuban MIG's in firing on this two-man shrimp boat, is the Government making an inquiry as to the possibility that this may have been the fate of the Sulphur Queen, the industrial tanker which left Beaumont on the 2nd of February and has not been heard from since the 3rd of February?

THE PRESIDENT: We have no information that that is the reason. Certainly, we would examine it, but we have no information.

SHRIMP BOAT INCIDENT

Press Conference - February 21, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, today's incident, sir, has caused some people in Congress again to say that the rocket firing proves that the Soviet weapons in Cuba are not defensive. Will this incident cause the Administration to re-evaluate its definition between offensive and non-offensive weapons?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. I think we made that very clear. When we are talking about offensive weapons, we are talking about weapons which have the capacity to carry great damage in the United States, bombers, particularly missiles. A MIG, with its rather limited range, is not regarded ordinarily as an offensive weapon, and the attack which took place on this vessel, which was lying in the water and which did not, as I understand, carry any flag, was relatively -- it was 40 miles or so off the coast of Cuba. I don't think that that changes our definition.

POST MORTEM ON OCTOBER CRISIS

T. V. Interview - December 16, 1962

MR. HERMAN: During the Cuban crisis when there was an offer of inspection inside Cuba by Premier Khrushchev, did you have any hope that there might be a breakthrough, a start to achieving some kind of peace between our two systems, so that we can work on our own problems?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I don't think that is there yet. Now, it may come in time.

MR. HERMAN: Did you have hope when it was offered that it might actually come about?

THE PRESIDENT: No, but I do think at least that Cuba, as I think the speech this week, which was an important speech, has made Mr. Khrushchev aware of the dangers of the United States and the Soviet Union clashing over an area of vital importance. So that I think is a very salutary fact. But I don't think we are about to see a whole change in Communist policy.

POST MORTEM ON OCTOBER CRISIS

T.V. Interview - December 16, 1962

MR. HERMAN: But there was an occasion when you were in contact, he spoke to you, he told you his very interesting version of the absence of all missiles in Cuba, of the absence of all offensive missiles in Cuba. Now, you were in contact. What did you have to do? Did you have to get up and grit your teeth and walk around the chair?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I read to him my September statement, in which we said we would take action if they put missiles in. He did not respond. That is why I say, we are quite a long way from being -- Mr. Khrushchev and I are in the same boat in the sense of both having this nuclear capacity, and also both wanting to protect our societies. Where we are not on the same wave is that the Sovietseexpand their power and are determined to, and have demonstrated in Cuba their willingness to take great risks, which can only bring about a direct collision. Now, I spent a whole day at Vienna talking about his speech he made on January 6, 1961, in which he said he was going to support wars of liberation, and I said this is the way for the United States and the Soviet Union to end up in direct confrontation, which is what happened in Cuba. You can't have too many of those, because we are not sure on every occasion that the Soviet Union will withdraw as they did in the case of Cuba. And the United States finds it difficult to withdraw when our vital interests are involved.

POST MORTEM ON OCTOBER CRISIS

T. V. Interview - December 16, 1962

MR. VANOCUR: Ambassador Kennan, who has some knowledge of the Soviet Union, wrote in one of his recent books that what you are dealing with here is a conditioned state of mind, that there is no misunderstanding here, that the only thing the Soviets really understand is when you present them with a set of facts and say to them, "This is what we are going to do." This they understand. Have you found that there is any way to break through to Mr. Khrushchev, to make him really aware that you are quite sincere and determined about what you say, sir, or is this a total --

THE PRESIDENT: Well, it is difficult. I think, looking back on Cuba, what is of concern is the fact that both governments were so far out of contact, really. I don't think that we expected that he would put the missiles in Cuba, because it would have seemed such an imprudent action for him to take, as it was later proved. Now, he obviously must have thought that he could do it in secret and that the United States would accept it. So that he did not judge our intentions accurately.

Well, now, if you look at the history of this century, where World War I really came through a series of misjudgments of the intentions of others, certainly World War II, where Hitler thought that he could seize Poland, that the British might not fight, and if they fought, after the defeat of Poland they might not continue to fight, Korea, where obviously the North Koreans did not think we were going to come in, and Korea, when we did not think the Chinese were going to come in, when you look at all those misjudgments which brought on war, and then you see the Soviet Union and the United States so far separated in their beliefs, we believing in a world of independent sovereign and different diverse nations, they believing in a monolithic Communist world, and you put the nuclear equation into that struggle, that is what makes this, as I said before, such a dangerous time, and that we must proceed with firmness and also with the best information we can get, and also with care. There is nothing -- one mistake can make this whole thing blow up. So that, one major mistake either by Mr. Khrushchev or by us here, so that is why it is much easier to make speeches about some of the things which we ought to be doing, but I think that anybody who looks at the fatality lists on atomic weapons, and realizes that the Communists have a completely twisted view of the United States, and that we don't comprehend them, that is what makes

the system is dangerous

life in

SHRIMP BOAT INCIDENT

Press Conference - February 21, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, could you elaborate on what is meant by all necessary action to prevent attacks on our shipping by Cuba-based planes?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. I have asked the Department of Defense to make any necessary revisions in standing orders so as to insure that action will be taken against any vessel or aircraft which executes an attack against a vessel or aircraft of the United States over international waters in the Caribbean.

QUESTION: Mr. President, in the same vein, taking your announcement about the message from the Russians on removal of some of their troops and this incident involving the shipping boat which has produced some very loud reaction in Congress, including Speaker McCormack saying it is an act of aggression, Senator Russell advocating a "hot pursuit" policy, these two things together, how does it affect the net situation with Cuba? Are we better off or worse?

THE PRESIDENT: Better off or worse than when? Yesterday?

QUESTION: Than before the Russian message was received or before this fishing boat incident.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know whether these two incidents can be -- these two matters can be that clearly linked. I think that we are very interested in seeing the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Cuba and we will be watching the progress that is made in that area over the next three weeks.

I don't think we know the full reasons behind this attack on this vessel, whether it was a deliberate decision by the Cuban Government or a decision by the pilots involved. In any case, I think we made it very clear what our response will be and we would hope that this response would make any future attacks such as this unlikely.

QUESTION: Mr. President, does the fact that the note of protest was sent to the Cuban Government mean that the United States Government holds the Cubans accountable for the use of MIG's instead of the Russians?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, These planes came from Cuba and flew under a Cuban flag and, therefore, unless the Soviet Union should claim they were flying them, we would hold the Cubans responsible.



COSTA RICA MEETING

Press Conference -- March 21, 1963

THE PRESIDENT: Good evening. Last night I returned from a three day meeting in San Jose, Costa Rica, with the Presidents of five Central American republics, and Panama. This was a most useful meeting. For the first time a President of the United States journeyed to Central America and conferred with all of the leaders of this vital area, which in terms of history, geography, common interest and common goals, is as closely allied with the United States as any area in the world. We agreed to continue our efforts under the Alliance for Progress, to build and strengthen the machinery for economic cooperation with and among the nations of Central America and Panama, including the creation of a unified economic community in Central America. And we also agreed on the necessity for measures to halt the flow of agents, money, arms and propaganda from Cuba to Central America.

Every nation present was determined that we would both protect ourselves against immediate danger and go forward with the great work of constructing dynamic, progressive societies, immune to the false promises of communism. This is the fourth Latin American country which I have visited. Here, as in all the others, we found a spontaneous outpouring of friendship and affection for the United States;

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and here, as in all the others, we saw impressive evidence of the work now being made and done under the Alliance for Progress.

Each trip makes it clear that Latin Americans, by an overwhelming majority are ready to work, to sacrifice, to fight if necessary, to maintain their own freedom, and to build societies which serve the welfare of all their people. They lack only the full measure of resources necessary to build a hemisphere where all can be secure and free. They know that they bear the fundamental responsibility for their own welfare and progress, but the receptions we have received in Costa Rica, in Mexico, in Venezuela and in Columbia, demonstrate that they also know that we in the United States today have a deep concern for their problems, a common dedication to their aspirations, and a faithful commitment to help them in their efforts. For all these reasons, I return from San Jose with increased confidence that we will continue to live in a hemisphere of independent, firm and faithful friends.

COSTA RICA MEETING

Press Conference -- March 21, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, there were some reports in San Jose that the Central American Presidents wanted to take stronger action or decide upon stronger measures against Cuba than you were. I wonder if you could clarify whether that was the case or not.

THE PRESIDENT: No, no proposal came in any of the meetings that I had with the Presidents. As you know, one of the conclusions reached at San Jose was to take effective measures, by the countries involved, and also to ask the other countries of Latin America to take effective measures to stem the flow of arms and particularly of men who move by subterranean means, frequently, without passports, from one country or another in Latin America, to Cuba, are trained and then come back for subversive activity. We are going to take effective means to attempt to control that traffic. There was no proposal.

I think they are quite aware that we have taken every conceivable action to isolate Cuba, that that is our ambition as long as Cuba maintains an association with the bloc, the Communists, and is used as a Communist military base.

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I don't think that the Presidents of Latin America thought that further action, invasion, or blockade at this time would be fruitful. At least none of them made that proposal to me. As you know, the burden of such an action would fall on the United States, and I think they are quite aware that the United States would have to carry out the action. We have responsibilities all through the world. You just mentioned South Korea and Berlin, as an example of two areas where we have vital commitments, so I think the Presidents of Central America are well aware that the United States is as anxious as they are to prevent the flow of communism in this Hemisphere and that we are taking every action that we believe to be responsible and effective to achieve that end.

They also recognize that one of the most effective ways is to meet conditions in their own countries, to make sure that communism doesn't get a grip, because of the failures of the economies. In one of the countries that we visited, 400 out of 1000 children do not attend any school. We cannot expect stable, democratic societies to develop in an atmosphere where half of the population is illiterate.

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Now, that is the kind of problem which has affected and infected Central America. The governments are attempting to meet these problems. We are attempting to help them through the Alliance for Progress. We believe that this is the most important step we can take now, combined with the actions we are presently taking against Cuba, which are well-known.

COSTA RICA MEETING

Press Conference -- March 21, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, at the Costa Rica meeting the Declaration of Central America carries a rather intriguing phrase. It is that: "Cuba will soon join the family of free nations." I wondered if there is anything that you gentlemen know about that that you could tell us that we don't know.

THE PRESIDENT: No, I think the strong conviction is that the people of Latin America want to be free, they don't want to live under a tyranny, and that Cuba will be free. That is the conviction of the people of Central America and Latin America. And that is the conviction of the people of the United States.

American Students in Cuba

Press Conference - August 1, 1963

QUESTION: Do you think that the United States might take any action against the students who are now in Cuba?

THE PRESIDENT: In regard to the students, their passports are going to be lifted when they come back here. Some of the leadership, it seems to me, are definitely Communists. The journey was paid for in cash by the Cuban Government. Some of the students may be just young men and women who are interested in broadening their horizons. But I think that they should have some concern for the security and foreign policy objectives of the United States.

In any case, their passports will be lifted, which may discourage their travel for a period, and, in addition, other steps may be considered in regard to a few who are not students but who are Communists.

AMERICANS TRAVELLING TO CUBA

Press Conference -- March 21, 1963

QUESTION: Mr. President, the House Un-American Activities Committee has been trying since last October to get some information from the Justice Department and the State Department about travelling United States citizens who are going in and out of Cuba by way of Mexico. They don't seem to be able to get any information on this, but some of these citizens come back and advertise lectures on the advantages of Castro's Cuba.

I am wondering how we can expect other countries to restrict this type of travel, as you say we plan to do in Nicaragua, I believe--

THE PRESIDENT: No, in Costa Rica.

QUESTION: Well -- I am wondering how we can expect other countries to stem this travel if we don't try to stem it by enforcing the McCarran-Walter Act?

THE PRESIDENT: I would think the Justice Department would be delighted to give any information. We have taken action, as you know, against some people who have gone to Cuba without a permit, or without permission of the United States Government. There has been some criticism, as a matter of fact, of an action we took against a newspaperman. We would attempt to and I would be delighted -- I would ask, if it has not already done so, and I would be surprised if it has not

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already done so. I would be very surprised if the Justice Department has not made available all the information that the committee requested. But if they have not, I will be glad to instruct them to do so.