

Document C:
Russian Ambassador Cable to Soviet Foreign Ministry (Modified)

Dobrynin's (Russia's ambassador to the U.S.) message to the Soviet Foreign Ministry, October 27, 1962.

Late tonight Robert Kennedy (President Kennedy's Attorney General) invited me to come see him. We talked alone.

Kennedy stated that, "The US government is determined to get rid of those bases [in Cuba] – up to, in the extreme case, of bombing them, since, I repeat, they pose a great threat to the security of the USA. In response I am sure the Soviets will respond and a real war will begin, in which millions of Americans and Russians will die. We want to avoid that in any way we can, I'm sure that the government of the USSR has the same wish."

"The most important thing for us is to get an agreement as soon as possible with the Soviet government to halt further work on the construction of the missile bases in Cuba and take measures under international control that would make it impossible to use these weapons."

"And what about Turkey?" I asked R. Kennedy

"If that is the only obstacle to achieving the rules I mentioned earlier, then the president doesn't see any difficulties in resolving the issue" replied R. Kennedy. "The greatest difficulty for the president is the public discussion of the issue of Turkey. The deployment of missile bases in Turkey was officially done by special decision of the NATO Council. To announce now a unilateral (one-sided) decision by the president of the USA to withdraw missile bases from Turkey – this would damage the entire structure of NATO and the US position as the leader of NATO. However, President Kennedy is ready to come to agreement on the question with Khrushchev. I think in order to withdraw these bases from Turkey we need 4-5 months. However, the president can't say anything public in this regard about Turkey."

R. Kennedy then warned that his comments about Turkey are extremely confidential; besides him and his brother, only 2-3 people know about it in Washington.

"The president also asked Khrushchev to give him an answer within the next day," Kennedy said in conclusion.

I should say that during our meeting R. Kennedy was very upset; in any case, I've never seen him like this before. True, about twice he tried to return to the topic of "deception," (that he talked about so persistently during our previous meeting), but he did so in passing and without any edge to it. He didn't even try to get into fights on various subjects, as he usually does, and only persistently returned to one topic: time is of the essence and we shouldn't miss the chance. After meeting with me he immediately went to see the president, with whom, as R. Kennedy said, he spends almost all his time now.