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10/17/62

Alternative Courses
of Action on Cuba

- 1) Political Action - objective A) to secure full support of NATO & OAS
(accompanied by B) to give KGB way out through summit meeting
open intensified C) to show world that USSR's word cannot be
surveillance and relied upon by demonstrating falsity of KGB
military preparations assurance that Soviet would not put Afenex
to defend US including weapons in Cuba
coverage of all disadvantages a) would make later military action more
Cuban targets risky & difficult both by eliminating surprise element
in US weapons) and by forcing time to conduct MRBMs
b) would not lend sufficient firmness to retain
confidence of allies as to US determination to defend
vital interests
c) would be regarded by some Americans as falling
short of action necessary to protect US security

2) Military Action

Air strike against
known MRBMs

Arguments for - would avoid disadvantages of political
course of action

Against It could not safely be confined to simple
punch strike unless it took out MIGs & I & 28s,
precluded attack on Guantánamo and was followed
up by continuing military action to prevent resec-
ment of Afenex weapons by Soviet and reprisals

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by Castro in U.S., Cuban immigrants and other h.A. countries

1) Realistically, any military course of action must envisage a full application of U.S. force including ultimately landings in Cuba and overthrow of Castro regime

2) Killing of Soviet technicians and destruction of Soviet weapons would force K to respond in kind, such as by move against Jupiter in Turkey, and since U.S. & USSR are militarily engaged directly, no sure way of limiting conflict

3/ Declaration of war accompanied by full blockade

Arguments for - would avoid some of disadvantages of political action alone (not 1) a) however) as well as risks of military action

Against - might be difficult to enforce against U.S. allies

b) might embroil U.S. in armed clashes with Soviet

c) would be long drawn out and as denegating to Cuban people with Castro regime

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Basic Choice between treating Cuba as part of overall U.S.-USSR set of problems (which means living with Soviet base in Cuba pending some broader settlement or understanding with K.) or running risk that by dealing with it as peripheral issue and hence susceptible of military solution U.S. will set in train series of actions that will involve U.S. & USSR in direct conflict

Underlying Issue - whether to initiate ^{major} use of force to settle issues between U.S. & USSR