



## OFFICE OF THE HISTORIAN

### FOREIGN RELATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES, 1961–1963, VOLUME VI, KENNEDY-KHRUSHCHEV EXCHANGES

## 70. Letter From Chairman Khrushchev to President Kennedy<sup>0</sup>

Moscow, October 28, 1962.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT, Ambassador Dobrynin has apprised me of his conversation with Robert Kennedy which took place on October 27. In this conversation Robert Kennedy said that it is somewhat difficult for you at the present time to publicly discuss the question of eliminating the US missile bases in Turkey because of the fact that the stationing of those bases in Turkey was formalized through a NATO Council decision.

Readiness to agree on this issue that I raised in my message to you of October 27<sup>1</sup> was also emphasized. In this context Robert Kennedy said that removal of those bases from Turkey would take 4 to 5 months. Furthermore, a wish was expressed that exchanges of views on this matter between you and I should continue through Robert Kennedy and the Soviet Ambassador, and that these exchanges should be considered confidential.

I feel I must state to you that I do understand the delicacy involved for you in an open consideration of the issue of eliminating the US missile bases in Turkey. I take into account the complexity of this issue and I believe you are right about not wishing to publicly discuss it. I agree that our discussion of this subject be pursued confidentially through Robert Kennedy and the Soviet Ambassador in Washington. You may have noticed that in my message to you on October 28, which was to be published immediately, I did not raise this question—precisely because I was mindful of your wish conveyed through Robert Kennedy. But all the proposals that I presented in that message took into account the fact that you had agreed to resolve, [*sic*]<sup>2</sup> the matter of your missile bases in Turkey consistent with what I had said in my message of October 27 and what you stated through Robert Kennedy in his meeting with Ambassador Dobrynin on the same day.<sup>3</sup>

I express my great appreciation to you for having instructed your brother R. Kennedy to convey those thoughts.

I hope, Mr. President, that agreement on this matter, too, shall be a no small step advancing the cause of relaxation [Page 190] of international tensions and the tensions between our two powers. And that in turn can provide a good impetus to resolving other issues concerning both the security of Europe and the international situation as a whole.

Mr. President, the crisis that we have gone through may repeat again. This means that we need to address the issues which contain too much explosive material. Not right away, of course. Apparently, it will take some time for the passions to cool down. But we cannot delay the solution to these issues, for continuation of this situation is fraught [*sic*] with many uncertainties and dangers.

Sincerely,

N. Khrushchev

0. Source: *Problems of Communism*, Special Edition—Spring 1992, pp. 60–62. The Russian–language text is *ibid.* This letter was forwarded by Ambassador Dobrynin to Robert Kennedy on October 29. The Attorney General studied the letter over night before asking Dobrynin to come to his office on October 30 and take it back because it involved a *quid pro quo*. For an account of this incident, see Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *Robert Kennedy and His Times*, p. 546. No record of the meeting has been found. The version of the letter printed here is an unofficial translation prepared by the Russian Embassy for publication in *Problems of Communism*.↵

1. Document 66.↵

2. These and following brackets are in the source text.↵

3. For a memorandum of this meeting, see vol. XI, Document 96.↵

4. Printed from a copy that bears this typed signature.↵