

## 326. Notes from transcripts of JCS meeting, October 17<sup>1</sup>

October 17, 1962

NOTES TAKEN FROM TRANSCRIPTS OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF,  
OCTOBER–NOVEMBER 1962, DEALING WITH THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS  
(Handwritten notes were made in 1976 and typed in 1993.)

CJCS: Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff. General Maxwell D. Taylor, USA.  
CSA: Chief of Staff, Army. General Earle G. Wheeler.  
CSAF: Chief of Staff, Air Force. General Curtis E. LeMay.  
CNO: Chief of Naval Operations. Admiral George W. Anderson, Jr.  
CMC: Commandant, Marine Corps. General David M. Shoup.  
CONAD: Continental Air Defense  
DIA: Defense Intelligence Agency  
DJS: Director, Joint Staff  
LANT: Atlantic  
NORAD: North American Air Defense  
OAS: Organization of American States  
RCT: Regimental Combat Team  
SAM: Surface-to-Air Missile  
TAC: Tactical Air Command

Wednesday, 17 October

JCS meeting at 1000: CJCS joined meeting at 1120:

DJS (RACM Riley): SecDef debriefed me on White House meeting at 1800 last night. Five courses of action were proposed. I: Attack MRBMs plus nuclear storage sites. II: Add to those MiG-2's and 11-28s. III: Add to those other air capabilities, SAMs, surface-to-surface missiles, and missile-carrying boats. IV: Attack all significant military targets but exclude tanks, since IV was not prelude to invasion. V: Add tanks to IV. They talked exclusively about carrying out I, after political preparations. The SecDef asked JCS about requirements to carry out these five options. The J-3 worked through the night and came up with this estimate for sorties: I: 52; II: 104; III: 194; IV: 474; V: 2002. (Several days later, because these totals did not explicitly include requirements for escort, suppression of air defenses, and post-strike reconnaissance, these figures had to be substantially revised upward. At that point, Gen. Taylor reacted as follows: "What! These figures were reported to the White House. You are defeating yourselves with your own cleverness, gentlemen.")

The JCS felt they should go on record as opposing strikes on MRBMs alone. Otherwise, if things went wrong, they might get the blame (see JCSM-794-62).

DJS: CJCS says that whatever is decided it will be a long time before they go to any invasion.

CJCS gives debrief of White House meeting that morning. This was the first small meeting (CJCS, McNamara, Rusk, Ball, Nitze, R. Kennedy, L. Thompson). We all agreed we had no hard positions. State preferred, first, a series of political measures that would minimize damage to the alliance and give Khrushchev an indication of what we planned to do. State also proposed a Kennedy–Khrushchev summit meeting. CJCS thinks they will say there must be some political action before a showdown. It was agreed that if we want to go to a blockade, we must declare war. CJCS adds that blockade is only in the minds of people who feel that striking missile sites alone is not enough.

1. Five courses of action proposed at White House meeting evening of October 16. Secret. 3 pp. DOD, Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Office of Joint History. [↪](#)