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10/18/62

Alternative Courses
of Action on Cuba

- 1) Political Action - objective (accompanied by open intensified surveillance and military preparations to defend US including coverage of all Cuban targets in US weapons)
- a) to secure full support of NATO & OAS
 - b) to give KGB way out through summit meeting
 - c) to show world that USSR's word cannot be relied upon by demonstrating falsity of KGB assurance that Soviet would not put offensive weapons on Cuba
- disadvantages a) would make later military action more risky difficult to pull by eliminating surprise element and by giving time to conceal MRBMs
- b) would not burden 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 quick strike unless it took out MRBMs & I & H 288, forestalled attack on Guantanamo and was followed up by continuing military action to prevent replacement of offensive 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 landing 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

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

2) would be long drawn out and as denegating to Cuban people who Castro regime

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Basic Choice between treating Cuba as part of overall U.S.-USSR set of a problem (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