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America and the Soviet Union ended the Cuban Missile Crisis by means of a secret deal brokered by Anatoly Dobrynin and Bobby Kennedy. Terms of the arrangement focused on the U.S. eliminating its Jupiter missiles in Turkey in exchange for the USSR removing its nuclear missiles from Cuba. This map image depicts the proximity of Turkey to the Soviet Union at the time of the missile crisis.

The truth, from Dobrynin's perspective, is stated in his telegram. Writing the message as soon as he left Kennedy's office, he quotes the Attorney General extensively. On the missile bases:

The USA government is determined to get rid of those bases - up to, in the extreme case, of bombing them, since, I repeat, they pose a great threat to the security of the USA. But in response to the bombing of these bases, in the course of which Soviet specialists might suffer, the Soviet government will undoubtedly respond with the same against us, somewhere in Europe. A real war will begin, in which millions of Americans and Russians will die. We want to avoid that any way we can, I'm sure that the government of the USSR has the same wish. However, taking time to find a way out is very risky.

Why is "taking time to find a way out" so risky? The Attorney General comments:

...there are many unreasonable heads among the generals, and not only among the generals, who are 'itching for a fight'. The situation might get out of control, with irreversible consequences.

Explaining the letter the President had just sent to the Soviet leader, Bobby Kennedy did not raise the issue of Jupiter missiles in Turkey. But Dobrynin did:

"And what about Turkey?" I asked R. Kennedy. "If that is the only obstacle to achieving the regulation I mentioned earlier, then the president doesn't see any insurmountable difficulties in resolving this issue," replied R. Kennedy. "The greatest difficulty for the president is the public discussion of the issue of Turkey."

Bobby explains why the President was concerned about public disclosure:

In short, if such a decision were announced now it would seriously tear apart NATO.

Then, according to Dobrynin, Bobby gave the Soviet ambassador what his government needed to hear:

"However, President Kennedy is ready to come to agree on that question with N.S. Khrushchev, too. I think that in order to withdraw these bases from Turkey," R. Kennedy said, "we need 4 - 5 months. This is the minimal amount of time necessary for the U.S. government to do this, taking into account the procedures that exist within the NATO framework."

Kennedy stressed the importance of secrecy:

"However, the president can't say anything public in this regard about Turkey," R. Kennedy said again. 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.

When Dobrynin finished the secret telegram containing a possible end to the crisis, he did not have a direct, secure method to quickly send it to Moscow. Like most other folks at the time, he had to call a Western Union bicycle boy.

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Jupiter Missile - Display

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