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As America and the Soviet Union negotiated over missiles in Cuba, the crisis worsened on October 27, 1962. Known as "Black Sunday," it was the day that President Kennedy knew he had to make a secret deal with Nikita Khrushchev, the Soviet leader. The issue was trading missiles for missiles.

The President met with a handful of his closest advisers. He had to respond in some way to the Kremlin's concern about U.S. missiles in Turkey. The President and Dean Rusk (the Secretary of State), instructed Bobby to privately meet with Anatoly Dobrynin (pictured at left), the Soviet Ambassador. The United States Attorney General would raise an issue that could neither be a written part of any deal nor a formal understanding.

Bobby memorialized the discussion in his manuscript for *Thirteen Days* (which was published after his assassination). The book itself, however, makes no mention of a deal which involved American withdrawal of missiles in Turkey in exchange for Soviet withdrawal of missiles in Cuba.

Dobrynin, during an Oral History Conference by crisis participants in January of 1989, confronted the Americans. Why was this important point - this missile trade - never acknowledged? Ted Sorensen, the uncredited editor of Bobby's book, explained why *Thirteen Days* is silent on the subject. (Scroll down 45%) Sorensen had deleted all references to it from Bobby's manuscript. The topic was, after all, still secret.

Philip Nash, in *The Other Missiles of October*, provides more background on Sorensen's 1989 revelations:

...Ted Sorensen revealed in 1989, the secret trade was explicit. Sorensen had edited Robert Kennedy's notes for publication as Thirteen Days in 1969, and now he admitted that they were "very explicit that [the Jupiter concession] was part of the deal." Dobrynin's reports of the conversation, recently released, confirm this admission. So one should take Robert Kennedy's first choice of words literally - "no deal of this kind could be made." A different sort of deal, one explicit but secret, was another matter. This is what the Kennedys offered that evening ... (See Nash, page 141.)

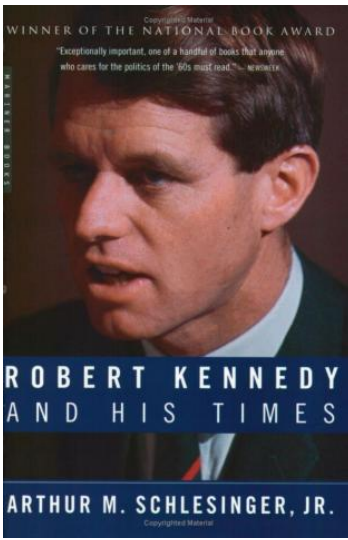
How can we learn what the two men actually discussed as they backed their respective countries away from the brink of nuclear war? We can look at Dobrynin's telegram to Moscow which he wrote immediately after he left Bobby's office. And we can examine the Attorney General's memo. They are most enlightening.

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Robert Kennedy And His Times - by A.M. Schlesinger

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Anatoly Dobrynin

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RFK - Bobby Kennedy and the Cuban Missile Crisis

From *RFK*, a film produced by David Grubin and aired on PBS' *American Experience*.



Written and Directed by David Grubin

Produced by David Grubin and Sarah Colt

Narrated by Blair Brown

Music by Michael Bacon

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