

Rusk, after his talks with Stevenson, concluded that a second Nicaraguan strike would put the United States in an untenable position internationally and that no further strikes should be launched until the planes could fly (or appear to fly) from the beachhead. Bundy agreed, and they called the President at Glen Ora.

It was now late Sunday afternoon. When Rusk said that the projected strike was one which could only appear to come from Nicaragua, Kennedy said, "I'm not signed on to this": the strike he knew about was the one coming ostensibly from the beachhead. After a long conversation, the President directed that the strike be canceled. When he put down the phone, he sat on in silence for a moment, shook his head and began to pace the room in evident concern, worried perhaps less about this decision than about the confusion in the planning; what would go wrong next? Those with him at Glen Ora had rarely seen him so low.

Bundy promptly passed on the word to General C. P. Cabell, the deputy director of CIA, and Rusk sent Bundy off to New York to answer any further questions from Stevenson. Soon Cabell and Bissell, deeply disturbed by the decision, arrived at Rusk's office it was now evening and tried to reopen the case. They argued that both the flotilla and the landing would be endangered if there were no dawn strike. Rusk replied that the ships could unload in darkness before Castro's planes located them and that after the landing the B-26s could defend the beaches from airstrips on shore. The vigorous discussion gave Rusk the impression that CIA regarded the Nicaraguan strike as important but not vital. He suggested to Cabell and Bissell that, if they wanted to carry their case further, they could appeal to the President, but they declined to do so. Instead, they retired to CIA and dejectedly sent out the stop order, which arrived in Nicaragua as the pilots were waiting in their cockpits for take-off.

At four-thirty the next morning Cabell awoke Rusk with a new proposal — that, if the invasion ships retired to international waters, they receive air cover from a United States carrier nearby. Rusk rejected this as a violation of the ban against United States participation, and Kennedy, to whom Cabell this time appealed at Glen Ora, confirmed the rejection. . . . Already the expeditionary