

“11:30-12:45 P.M. Meeting on the Military Situation in Cuba,” 29 October 1962, excerpt, David Coleman, editor, *The Presidential Recordings John F. Kennedy The Winds of Change Volume Four October 29-November 7, 1962* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2016), pages 36-37.

Shoup: The question is-the \$64 question is, whether they would use the tactical nuclear weapons-
President Kennedy: Nuclear weapons?

Shoup: -at that point, because they would deal bloody hell with Guantanamo, of course. If nuclear weapons start down there, I'd say we're at nuclear war. We couldn't afford to let them do that. I mean, they're not [*unclear*].

President Kennedy: But my guess is, well, everybody sort of figures that, *in extremis*, that everybody would use nuclear weapons. The decision to use any kind of a nuclear weapon, even the tactical ones, presents such a risk of it getting out of control so quickly, that there's a ...

Shoup: But Cuba's so small compared to the world. [*Chuckles*]

President Kennedy: Yeah. Shoup: [f that joker [Castro] ever had the control [of the tactical nuclear weapons], now ... Of course they're [the Soviets] telling us they got the keys, like we've got the keys-

President Kennedy: I'm sure they do. I'm sure they do.

Shoup: And the Russians say [to the Americans]: "We've got the keys and you've got the keys. You trust us; we trust you ... "

President Kennedy: No, we don't *trust* each other. [*Laughter*] But we figure that they're never giving them to the Cubans, any more than we'd give them to, you know, the Turks.

Anderson: No.

President Kennedy: Because we know that ... I don't think anybody wants that weapon to escape from their control. It's just too



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