

## JFK Meeting Tape 31.2

**Date:** 1962-10-19

**Participant:** John F. Kennedy

**Participant:** Curtis E. LeMay

**Start Time:** 09:45

**Place Name:** Cabinet Room

SCROLLER TITLE: "A Pretty Bad Fix"

SCENE SETTER: After criticizing President Kennedy's decision to impose a blockade on Cuba, Air Force chief of staff Curtis E. LeMay told JFK that he faced a serious dilemma. The President assured LeMay it was one they shared.

**Curtis E. LeMay:** But the big thing is, if we leave them there, is the blackmail threat against not only us but the other South American countries that they may decide to operate against. There's one other factor that I didn't mention that's not quite in our field, [which] is the political factor. But you invited us to comment on this at one time. And that is that we have had a talk about Cuba and the SAM [surface-to-air missile] sites down there. And you've made some pretty strong statements about these being defensive, and we would take action against offensive weapons. I think that a blockade and political talk would be considered by a lot of our friends and neutrals as being a pretty weak response to this. And I'm sure a lot of our own citizens would feel that way, too. In other words, you're in a pretty bad fix at the present time.

**President Kennedy:** What did you say?

**LeMay:** You're in a pretty bad fix.

**President Kennedy:** You're in with us. [*Slight laughter, a bit forced.*] Personally.

*End of excerpt.*

CITATION: "Meeting with the Joint Chiefs of Staff on the Cuban Missile Crisis on 19 October 1962," Tape 31.2, John F. Kennedy Library, President's Office Files, Presidential Recordings Collection, *Presidential Recordings Digital Edition* [*The Great Crises*, vol. 2, ed. Timothy Naftali and Philip Zelikow] (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014-). URL: <http://prde.upress.virginia.edu/conversations/8020050>